

News from behind the

IRON CURTAIN

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FEATURES

- The Romanian Course
- Internal Trade and Consumer Goods in Czechoslovakia
- Collective Leadership
- "Operation Veto"
- The Partisan Reviewer
- Radio Free Europe



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ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION . . .

NEWS FROM BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN, published monthly by the Free Europe Press of the Free Europe Committee, is circulated to those with a specific interest in events and developments in Communist-dominated Europe. This bulletin is made available to representatives of the press and other media, to universities, churches, libraries, and research centers, and to other groups of citizens who want to know more about "Communism in practice." The magazine is not an organ of editorial policy; wherever possible direct quotation is used to provide source material and to document commentary. The Committee believes that accurate information contributes to an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the Communist system, and hence to the ability of the free nations to combat this system.

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The Month in Review

THE PAST month saw Party Congresses held in Hungary and Czechoslovakia at which the economic problems plaguing Satellite leaders received the limelight. Time and again Communist speakers scored the **critical weakspots in industry and agriculture** revealing the meager results and great difficulties of the New Course program to date. Despite recent farm concessions, livestock continued to lag seriously, yields remained low, delivery quotas were not met and everywhere peasant **apathy and resistance** hamstrung Communist plans. As a result of these persistent troubles on the farms, with all the results of decollectivization and private plot encroachments on the kolkhoz lands, Hungarian Communists took a **harsher line against kulaks** than hitherto, although they made no moves to roll back the private plot encroachments or the decollectivization. Communist leaders in both countries still emphasized that **collectivization** theoretically **remained** the Party's chief goal, but now kolkhozes were to be converted into model farms to "attract" the independent peasantry, and the Party's cadres were at the same time to try to "persuade" them of the "rightness of collectivization."

New Course industrial achievements were also far below Communist expectations. Hungarian and Czechoslovak leaders complained bitterly that lack of discipline permeated the State administration, and that **economic officials** were **irresponsible and incompetent**. Included among managerial crimes were excessive bureaucracy, violation of Party orders, and "liberalism"—manifested particularly in the practice of condoning absenteeism and exceeding the wage base. Even more striking were complaints about **rising production costs**. The huge losses due to defective production, absenteeism and waste were harshly condemned, and Party leaders insisted that a **strict regimen of economy and discipline be installed** in all industrial branches. Matyas Rakosi, the First Party Secretary of Hungary, pointed out that if production costs were not decreased, no improvements in the living standard could be expected, especially in the form of further price cuts.

Other industrial weakspots were also underscored. Regime speakers denounced lagging output in the coal and power industries, and insisted that transportation had to be improved. These criticisms followed earlier reports about large-scale discontent among miners and railroad employees. In both Hungary and Czechoslovakia, new **Five Year Plans** are scheduled to begin in **1956** under the supervision of Komekon. The years 1954 and 1955 will be devoted to "preparations"—that is, to eliminating specific weak spots—after which time it is expected that the **entire Satellite economy** will be more closely **coordinated** from Moscow.

The Congresses also showed that conditions within the Communist Parties had not been improved by the New Course, and that **petty despotism**, "deviation" and **apathetic leadership** still prevail. Emphasis was placed on installing "collective leadership and inner Party democracy," but every precaution was taken to make clear that the **New Course** signified neither a new "liberalism" nor a period of **relaxation**. Top Communists urged the introduction of greater militancy and pointed out the Party's leading role in ensuring fulfillment of the New Course economic program. The numerous complaints about Party work illustrated that the New Course had not given rise to Party efficiency but, instead, had bred greater confusion and internal dissension in middle and lower party levels.



Similar New Course problems were evident elsewhere in the region. In Poland the government took steps to **strengthen discipline on collective farms** through the installation of permanent labor brigades. A system of bonuses for overfulfillment of quotas was also introduced and a new graduated wage scale devised, which distinguished between various categories of farm workers. These measures were designed to give peasants "work incentive" and, at the same time, to increase yield and facilitate closer control over individual output.

The **livestock shortage in Bulgaria** resulted in the calling of a special conference on stockbreeding. Central Committee member George Traikov declared that the present livestock population was still below the 1939 level and that animal husbandry on collectives was particularly unsatisfactory. **Peasants** continue to **slaughter young animals, milk productivity is low, and egg production has declined to such a degree that it barely reaches pre-war levels.** Further, Traikov underscored fodder, manpower and construction shortcomings in the State sector, and insisted that immediate steps be taken to remedy matters.

The Bulgarian regime also attempted to **improve consumer goods production and internal trade** by issuing two decrees giving 1955 plan targets and detailed instructions to the responsible ministries and agencies. The decrees confirmed earlier information on inadequate, defective and uneconomical production as well as on worker and managerial apathy.

In Czechoslovakia, **labor shortages in crucial industries** such as mining, construction and agriculture received special emphasis in an appeal to young people to take jobs in these sectors. Teachers and parents were urged to counsel graduates "wisely"—that is, to persuade them that the choice of a career in a "Socialist State" should be based on the requirements of the economy, not on the needs of individual human beings.

The Romanian Course

Past Errors:

"The rate of industrialization has been forced, especially with regard to heavy industry, which led to the establishment of too large a volume of capital investment in comparison with the national revenue, exceeding even the provisions of the Five Year Plan. . . . The slogan of achieving the Five Year Plan in four years was launched without sufficient study and does not correspond to the real prospects of the national economy."

Gheorghiu-Dej, August 23, 1953



Caption: The patron saint of those who must wait until Doomsday.
Sign in the drawing reads: "Come back tomorrow."

Urzica (Bucharest), February 28, 1954

LIKE all other countries in the Soviet orbit, Romania recently attempted to solve some of her most pressing economic problems by instituting a New Course. The program was officially launched by Premier Gheorghiu-Dej on August 23, 1953, and ever since has been the focus of regime propaganda proclaiming an imminent rise in the living standard. Although the Communists have publicized their new goal as betterment of the national welfare, it is difficult at this point to determine just how far the new program will actually go towards bringing about improvement in living conditions. It seems that any far-reaching changes would probably require a greater revision of economic targets than the Communists appear willing to make at present.

Echoing Satellite leaders elsewhere in the Iron Curtain area, Premier Gheorghiu-Dej announced the New Course by admitting that his government's program of rapid industrialization had put a severe strain on the nation and given rise to an unbalanced economy: he revealed that the consumer goods industry, agriculture and the living standard had suffered from neglect, and that the raw material base had undergone a decline. To remedy this unbalance, he said, investments for the remaining years of the Five Year Plan (1951-1955) would be revised so as to center

attention on agriculture, light industry and other projects for improving living conditions. As quoted by *Scintea* (Bucharest), August 23, 1953, the Premier outlined the main changes as follows:

"The improvement of our economic policy must mean better distribution of materials, and particularly of capital investments, leading to the harmonious development of all branches of the national economy. Of the total investments, reductions are to be made in the funds earmarked for heavy industry and other works and an additional fund of five billion *lei* allotted to the development of agricultural production, consumer goods, housing and other socio-cultural works. In 1955 the proportion of investments for the consumer goods industry and for agriculture will be double that of 1953. . . . With regard to heavy industry, special emphasis will be placed on those branches which have a sure raw material base. Raw material reserves must be increased and efforts made to discover new resources."

The Background

The events leading to the Romanian New Course reveal not only the difficulties inherent in the forced industrializa-

tion of an agricultural country, but also the Communists' refusal to recognize the danger signals along the way or to readjust their plans in face of pressing human and economic realities. Over the past nine years, Romania presumably has succeeded in increasing steel production fourfold over 1938, with an annual output of 750,000 tons.* Similarly, in 1953, coal production supposedly reached a high of six million tons—that is, two and one-half times that of 1938—and oil production totalled 9.30 million tons as compared with 6.22 in 1939. These gains, however, were achieved at the expense of the national welfare and amidst food shortages, inflations, lagging agriculture, worker resistance and growing disruption of the economy. They were cut to the ruthless pattern of post-war Romanian economic development established shortly after the 1945 coup.

Between the years 1945-1948, the regime consolidated its power and concentrated on producing goods for reparations to the USSR, which demanded emphasis on heavy industrial items. Shortly after the coup, Romanian Communists declared an agrarian reform: the large landed estates were abolished and the State retained 350,000 hectares of this farm land and distributed the other 1,109,000 hectares among 918,000 peasants, limiting each farm to 50 hectares. The result of this measure was an immediate decline in farm production; the food shortage which followed was aggravated by an unprecedented drought, increased food exports to the USSR, and a war-weakened economy.** Farm prices started rising and the country was involved in a mounting spiral of inflation.*** The land reform was followed by a May 1945 agreement with the Soviet Union for "economic collaboration and trade." As a result, the first Sovroms—or "mixed" Soviet-Romanian companies—were established, constituting landmarks in the program of Soviet imperialism.† Set up with German assets appropriated by the USSR, the first five Sovroms were for oil production, lumber, air and water transportation and banking. In 1947, the Communists took another step to consolidate their power and establish their pattern of economic development. Shortly before the Communist-dominated elections, the regime announced a currency reform which had the effect of liquidating the people's savings. The new *leu* was issued at the ratio of 1: 20,000; no more than 5,000,000 *lei* could be exchanged and bank deposits were frozen. The

* *Probleme Economice* #12, (Bucharest), 1953.

** As quoted by *Scintea* (Bucharest), February 23, 1948, Gheorghiu-Dej had reported to the Central Committee: "The consequence of two years of drought was, aside from starvation in some regions, . . . a disorganization of foreign trade which robbed the country of the possibility of importing equipment and raw materials."

*** The country was more or less isolated from foreign markets through the rigidity of the Armistice Convention. The Romanian newspaper *Argus*, March 7, 1947, stated that if one eighth of Romanian oil production of that year had been exported to South America, the nation could have purchased 700,000 tons of grain to combat the famine. It is noteworthy, however, that 70,000 tons of oil were shipped to the USSR to assure transfer of dividends due to the Soviet Union for "participation" in the Sovroms.

† See September 1952 issue, pp. 29-30. The production of these firms was actually considered part of Soviet economy and could not be included in reparations.

people hardest hit were the middle class and farmers who had accumulated billions of *lei* by trading their produce. Subsequent to this measure, the Communists liquidated the remaining political parties in the country and, by June 11, 1948, felt sufficiently confident to pass a law for nationalization of private industry.

The Pauker Group Purged

The years 1949 to 1953 were marked by an upswing in heavy industrialization. This was manifested in the two yearly plans for 1949 and 1950, drafted by Chief of the Planning Commission, Miron Constantinescu, and in the Five Year Plan initiated in 1951.* The regime's aim was to develop a heavy industry which, among other things, would be able to supply the State with all the materials necessary for mechanization and collectivization of agriculture. This ambition was expressed by Gheorghiu-Dej, who was quoted by *Scintea* (Bucharest), March 18, 1949, as saying: "The principal lever for guiding agriculture along the Socialist road is Socialist industry—heavy industry." The Party Central Committee decided to embark on the "Socialist road" to agriculture in March 1949, when it announced the beginning of collectivization. In June, another large-scale project was tackled; work on the ill-fated Danube Black Sea Canal was begun, only to be abandoned in 1953 with but a small part completed, despite the large amount of manpower—mostly forced labor—employed on its construction.** Within two years after the first formal economic plan for Communist Romania was evolved, the regime encountered difficulties, and by September 1951, there were signs that the Party had hit a snag in attempting to carry out its farm and industrial programs simultaneously.

The problems confronting regime leaders in attempting to implement this twofold policy were reflected in the 1952 purge of Ana Pauker, Vasile Luca, and Teohari Georgescu, who were accused, among other crimes, of having sabotaged the farm collectivization program. The chart illustrating the tempo of collectivization suggests that at the end of 1950 trouble had already started, and that late in 1951 the Pauker faction decided on a slowdown, probably on the basis of mounting inflation, lagging farm production and peasant resistance. Their attitude probably was that collectivization should be halted temporarily while all energies were focussed on rapid industrialization.

* See November 1953 issue, p. 42. The 1949 Plan provided 36.8 percent of the total investment funds for heavy industry and mining. In 1950, this figure was raised to 44.8 percent, and in the original version of the Five Year Plan it was set at 44.1 percent. In 1949, investments in agriculture and forestry were 9.4 percent; in 1950, 6.6 percent; and in the original Five Year Plan 10.0 percent. In 1949, light industry was 10.4 percent of the total investments; in 1950, 5.4 percent, and in the original Five Year Plan, 9.3 percent. According to *Romanian News*, February 26, 1950, the 1949 Plan for industry was fulfilled by 108 percent, insuring a 40 percent increase over the 1948 volume of industrial production.

** According to various sources, other long-term projects have also been abandoned. This includes the construction of a subway in Bucharest and the plan for rebuilding the capital. The only plan evidently still in operation on a modified scale is the construction of a huge dam on the Bistrita River, which is to supply energy to the Bicaz power plant.

Romanian Collectivization, 1949-1953

	1949	1950	1951	1952	1st Half 1953	2nd Half 1953
Total number of collectives.....	56	1027	1089	1796	1980	1998
Number of collectives formed yearly.....	56	971	62	707	184	18
Total number of households included.....	4058	67,719	75,065	165,411		178,000
Number of households yearly.....	4058	63,661	7,346	90,346		13,000
Surface in hectares.....	?	286,640	297,000	?	732,000	800,000

This decision was apparently unacceptable to Moscow, which had no qualms about straining the Satellite economy. After the purge of the Pauker group, collectivization was pushed to a new extreme, but by the end of 1953 a brake was again put on the "socialization" process.* (See above chart.)

When it decided to slow down collectivization at the September 19, 1951 Central Committee session, the Party embarked on a policy of consolidating existing kolkhozes and forming permanent peasant associations on the pattern of the Soviet TOZ.** Ruthless elimination of kulaks was denounced in favor of a policy of "limitation." This change of attitude, however, was shortlived; within a few months, the program of harsh collectivization was re-established, kulaks were bitterly attacked, and the regime decided to combat inflation by a new, drastic currency reform. This revaluation took place on January 28, 1952, and had a devastating effect on the population. Prices were readjusted at the rate of one new *lei* for 20 old *lei*, but the exchange of money was regulated on the basis of 1: 100 to 1: 400 on a sliding scale, according to the amount of cash presented.*** In other words, the consumer's money was worth much less than it had been hitherto and his buying power was considerably reduced by the rise in the cost of living. An estimated 10 billion *lei* were drawn into State coffers as a result of this measure, and the peasant, stripped of his savings, reacted (according to refugee reports) by refusing to bring his produce to market.

It was later revealed that the currency reform had been carried out against the bitter opposition of Minister of Finance Vasile Luca and his advisers Ana Pauker and Minister of Interior Teohari Georgescu. In March, Luca was dismissed from his government post, and by May, Ana Pauker and Georgescu also had fallen into disgrace. But these three were not the only Communists affected. The reform set off a large-scale shakeup of the Party leadership, which led to the June appointment of Gheorghiu-Dej as Prime Minister of the country. Within this period, the regime passed a decision for the "consolidation of the monetary reform" and launched various attacks against the purged leaders. The April 1952 issue of *Probleme Economice* (Bucharest) accused the Pauker clique of reducing peasant taxes in favor of kulaks by 32 percent between 1948 and 1949. The same article claimed that the 1949 kulak lists should have shown kulak farms totalling 5.5 percent

(165,000 kulaks) of the total number of farms in Romania, as estimated by Gheorghiu-Dej in his March 1949 report to the Central Committee. Instead, allegedly due to Luca's policy, the kulak lists showed that in 1949 there were 2.25 percent kulak farms (67,500 kulaks), in 1950, 2.1 percent (63,000 kulaks), and in 1951, 1.5 percent (45,000 kulaks). In other words, the "anti-State plotters" were accused of "rightist deviations," although Ana Pauker was also declared guilty of "leftist deviation"—that is, of violating the voluntary principle of peasants joining collectives.*

Decisions and Revisions

In contrast to these "deviations," an April 12, 1952 editorial in *Scintea* (Bucharest) asserted the "correct" Party policy; that is, the necessity of simultaneous "socialization" of both town and countryside. The newspaper stated: "The contradictions between town and countryside must be eliminated, [the situation which shows that] while in towns Socialist industry is growing strongly centralized . . . with high labor productivity, in the country we have an undeveloped agriculture with the land split into small plots." *Scintea* also insisted that kulaks be restrained from their damaging practices by means of taxation and compulsory delivery quotas, and the paper saw fit to caution readers that the individual peasant, like the small businessman, continually "generates capitalism."

The direct and indirect attacks against the Pauker group continued for some time. In June, when Gheorghiu-Dej was appointed Prime Minister, for instance, the Central Committee issued a lengthy statement claiming that Luca had been expelled from the Party because he had wanted to re-establish capitalism. On September 12, *Scintea* (Bucharest) published an article similar to the one above

Collectivization:

"The Plenum of the Central Committee . . . stressed that in carrying out the Socialist transformation of agriculture, constant attention must be paid to the economic-organizational consolidation of collective farms and associations, with a view to turning them into real centers for drawing the working peasants to the Socialist forms of agriculture, and organizing new collective farms and associations in step with creating technical conditions, training medium and superior cadres, and convincing individual peasants of the advantages of Socialist agriculture."

Gheorghiu-Dej, August 23, 1953

* See July 1952 issue, pp. 1-4.

* Probleme Economice (Bucharest), May-June 1953, *Scintea* (Bucharest), August 24, 1953 and February 11, 1954.

** *Scintea* (Bucharest), September 19, 1951.

*** See March 1952 issue, pp. 1-4.

pointing to intensified farm collectivization.* Quoting Stalin, the newspaper wrote: "Socialist construction cannot in the long run stand on two different bases at once—on the basis of the most concentrated Socialist industry and that of the most divided and primitive small peasant farm." The newspaper urged "socialization" of both sectors and, as has been said above, late in 1952 collectivization was pushed to a new extreme. However, developments within the country indicated that despite Communist theory, Romanian industry was unable to fulfill the threefold task of fulfilling trade agreements with the Soviet Union,** supplying the domestic market, and providing machinery for an agriculture which continued to decline. If Gheorghiu-Dej emerged as the victor in the Party dispute, he soon jettisoned the policy on which he rode to power; by August 1953 he was forced to revise his farm policy along the lines recommended by the Pauker clique.

As early as June 17, 1952, there were indications that the same pace could not be maintained. Gheorghiu-Dej met with a delegation of forty miners to discuss the problem of "raising the material and cultural level of miners and increasing production."*** The miners—who had an audience of six hours—complained bitterly of food shortages and poor housing conditions; the seriousness of the situation was underscored ten days later, when the Prime Minister traveled to the Jiu Valley, where he emphasized the gravity of prevailing conditions and attempted to give miners work incentives by promising them larger food supplies, a pay rise of 15 percent, and the construction of 5,000 apartments. This speech may be considered the first deviation from the set plan for industrialization, because to make good its promises, the Party had to initiate changes in various other branches of the economy.

In the beginning of 1953, the Communists finally recognized the need for a New Course. In February, at the National Congress of Railroad Workers, Gheorghiu-Dej, himself a former organizer of the railroadmen's union, promised workers higher wages, improved work facilities and better housing conditions.† Towards the end of February, technicians and engineers working in agriculture, held a meeting in Bucharest at which Gheorghe Apostol, speaking for the

* According to figures published in *Romanian News*, June 22, 1952, the following stage of Socialization had been reached by mid-1952: industry, 95 percent; transport, 85 percent; arable land, 12.6 percent; and forest areas, 85 percent. In addition, 76 percent of the trade network belonged to the "Socialist sectors" and foreign trade was a State monopoly. The same publication stated that by the end of 1951, industry represented 60.4 percent of the total economy.

** By 1952 there were 14 Sovroms in Romania. Further, the Soviet domination of Romanian trade is indicated by the following statement on so-called Soviet aid. According to *Romanian News*, June 25, 1950, "during the first eight months of 1949, 57 percent of the coke needed for Romanian industry was imported from the USSR." This also applied to 55 percent of iron alloys, 81 percent of electrolytic copper for the cable industry, 91 percent of cotton used in spinning and all prime materials for the rubber industry. The Romanian government was supposed to export to the USSR the finished product. On February 17, 1950, a trade agreement was signed stating that trade between the two countries would increase by more than 30 percent.

*** *Scintea* (Bucharest), June 20, 1952.

† *Scintea* (Bucharest), February 15, 1953.



Title: Animals Which Must Disappear.

Caption: The Porcupine, or how some people react to criticism.
Urzica (Bucharest), February 28, 1954

regime, somewhat reversed the Stalin theme of "no relief for the kulak will lighten our burdens on the grain front." Stressing the importance of peasants working small and middle farms, Apostol indicated that the independent peasantry would be treated more considerately in the future.* In April, the regime declared an amnesty—patterned on a similar measure in the USSR—which resulted in the release of thousands of prisoners sentenced for economic crimes.** Other indications of a milder policy followed. At a congress of agricultural leaders in May 1953, Gheorghiu-Dej promised to revise the wage system of farm workers and to draft a new statute for kolkhozes. As quoted by *Scintea* (Bucharest), May 24, the Premier explained that about 75 percent of the nation's grain production came from independent farms, and said: "The peasant needs time to be convinced with his own eyes of the advantages of collective farming. . . . It is not easy to take such a step." And on June 18, 1953, *Scintea* (Bucharest) admitted regime difficulties and hinted at a change of tactics.

* The Stalin statement was quoted in *Probleme Economice* (Bucharest), April 1952. Apostol's speech was printed in *Scintea* (Bucharest), February 26, 1953.

** See May 1953 issue, p. 10.

"Our Party does not fear to show the masses openly the inherent difficulties in a change as deep as the one from capitalism to Socialism—transient difficulties which can be defeated only by the united fight of the people."

The New Course

Finally, on August 23, Premier Gheorghiu-Dej outlined a new economic program. He declared that the planned investments between 1953-1955 would be redistributed to encourage the development of light industry and agriculture. Within this period, six billion *lei* would be devoted to agriculture—that is, more than twice the amount invested in 1950-1952; investments in the food industry would increase from the original figure of 980 million *lei* to 1.8 billion; and in the textile and footwear industry, investments would amount to 1.2 billion *lei*. On the basis of these figures, published in *Scintea* (Bucharest), August 23, 1953, investments in the original Five Year Plan have been redistributed in percentage terms as follows:^{*}

	Original	Modified
Agriculture and Forestry	10.0	13.1
Heavy Industry and Mining.....	44.1	34.1
Light Industry	9.3	14.1
Transport and Communications..	16.2	16.2
Internal Trade	2.2	2.2
Housing and Communal Buildings.	3.2	5.2
Cultural and Social Investments..	10.2	10.2
Miscellaneous	4.8	4.9

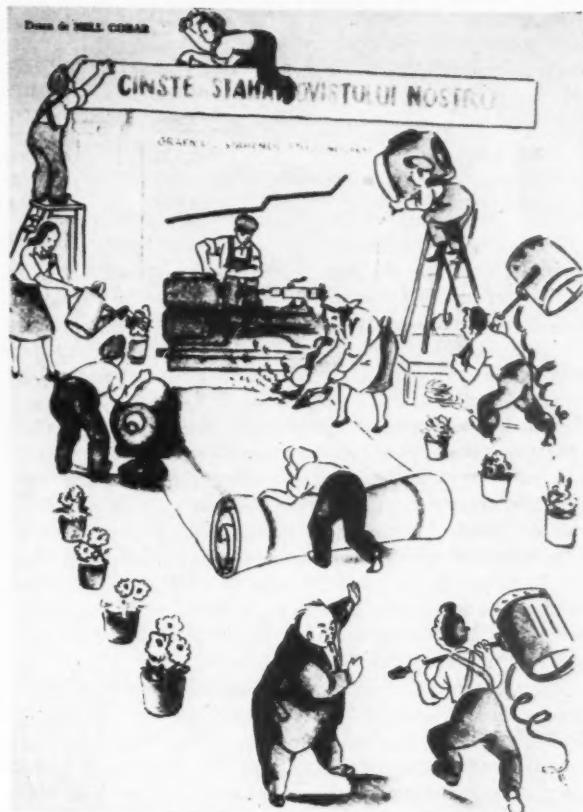
In view of this investment redistribution, the regime estimates the following production increases in light industry^{**}: in 1954, meat, fish, edible oil, and sugar production should increase 40-60 percent over 1953; textile production by 1954 should reach 219 million square meters, and by 1955, 250 million square meters; production of leather footwear in 1955 is expected to exceed ten million pairs, and rubber footwear to increase to four million pairs. If these and other statistics given by Gheorghiu-Dej are compared with the original Five Year Plan goals, they show that, with the exception of rubber footwear, the regime has scaled down targets for light industry:^{***}

	Original	Revised
Cotton fabrics, million square meters.	266.5	250
Woolen fabrics, million square meters	39.4	32.5
Silk fabrics, million square meters....	41.8	19
Leather footwear, million pairs.....	20.7	10
Rubber footwear, million pairs.....	2.7	4

* No official statement has indicated that the total amount of investments has increased, nor has the regime published a complete version of the redistribution. The original Five Year Plan investments were set in 1951 at 66.5 billion new *lei* (\$10 billion.)

** These figures were published in *Scintea* (Bucharest), August 23, 1953.

*** These statistics were taken from *Scintea* (Bucharest), August 23, 1953, and *Scintea* (Bucharest), December 16, 1950.



Sign in the cartoon: "Let us honor our Stakhanovites!"

Caption: "Hurry hurry," the plant manager says, "bring over all the lights. All we've got in our factory is just one Stakhanovite, and you don't even know how to put him into the spotlight."

Urzica (Bucharest), February 28, 1954

The above statistics indicate that the original targets were set much too high and that now, even with increased investments, they probably cannot be attained. It is also interesting to note that while Gheorghiu-Dej revealed that some heavy industrial targets had been reduced, present goals are still high* (See chart on following page). However, since regime plans frequently are not fulfilled, and since Communist statistics cannot be considered reliable, more precise determination of the actual scope of the New Course program in light and heavy industry will have to await further developments.

Agriculture

The regime's farm program is a calculated attempt to improve livestock production, the agricultural yield and the cultivation of industrial plants. In pursuing these goals, the government has tried to give farmers incentive to raise output by means of increased credits and prices paid for certain products, bonuses, and reduced taxes and delivery

* *Scintea* (Bucharest), August 23, 1953, and *Scintea* (Bucharest), December 16, 1950.

Heavy Industrial Plan Targets

	Steel (Tons)	Pig Iron (Tons)	Coal (Tons)	Nat. Gas (Million Cub. Meters)	Electric Power (Kwts)	Cement (Tons)
1953	750,000	456,000	6,100,000	2,660	1,050,000	2,000,000
1955 original	1,252,000	800,000	8,533,000	3,900	1,700,000	2,855,000
1955 revised	1,000,000	800,000	8,533,000	3,800	1,380,000	2,700,000

quotas. Although the concessions have favored kolkhozes over independent farms, the latter also have been granted tangible aid. In discussing the role of independent farmers on August 23, Gheorghiu-Dej once again pointed out that they produce 75 percent of the grain for market and are an essential factor in farm production. "The State," he said, "will help small and middle peasant households with tractors and other farm machinery, will provide cheap credit . . . help them to acquire chemical fertilizers, building materials, encourage stockbreeding and the cultivation of industrial crops. The prices of some goods will be reduced in exchange trading." The Premier stressed, however, that unflagging attention must be paid to strengthening collective farms and organizing new ones. For this purpose, kolkhozes will be granted credits up to 100 million *lei* in 1954 and 200 million in 1955.

The agricultural concessions granted within the past nine months have included such measures as cancellation of 1952 delivery arrears, tax reductions and exemptions on certain incomes of private and collective farms, free veterinary care of livestock, reduction of meat, wool and milk delivery quotas to the State, and new contract-purchase systems to encourage the rearing and fattening of livestock, the cultivation of industrial plants and the production of fruit and vegetables.* In addition, the regime has turned over 448,000 hectares of land from State reserves to kolkhozes, peasant associations**, and lastly to individual farms, mainly for grazing.

According to the farm decree provisions, it appears that the tax reductions and exemptions have a twofold purpose: to encourage increased production, especially of badly-needed crops, and to assure the State a monopoly of farm production—a step which might eventually lead to abolition of the free market. The system works as follows: income tax on newly-planted orchards during the first two years of their existence will be abolished. On incomes from beehives, collectives will be granted a 50 percent reduction and private farms 25 percent. The same measures have been applied to other, special crops. Tax reductions and exemptions have also been allowed collective or private

* For detailed information on the various farm decrees, see March 1954 issue, pp. 11-14 and December 1953 issue, pp. 45-46. In an April 20, 1954 speech on the budget, D. Petrescu announced that in 1954, the working peasantry will receive almost 600 million *lei* as advance payments for contract meat deliveries of fattened animals, technical plants and other farm produce.

** Owing to the extreme difficulties in collectivizing Romanian land, the Communists were forced to establish a unique type of intermediate collectivized unit called an agricultural association. In farm decrees, the associations receive an intermediate rate between the advantageous kolkhoz rate and the rate for independent farmers. See March 1954 issue, p. 9.

farmers signing contracts with State enterprises for production of certain industrial plants for quantities above the amount committed. Similarly, income from certain industrial crops sold exclusively to the State will not be taxable, as well as income resulting from crops in excess of the average production per hectare in a particular region. Income tax reductions also will be granted those farmers (only kolkhoz members and members of peasant associations) who sell their surplus products on the official market or to consumer cooperatives. For the private peasant, the regime has promised a 50 per cent sales tax reduction for surplus products sold on the official market.

Incentives and Livestock

A noteworthy aspect of the farm concessions is the attempt to increase the flow of trade between town and countryside through State-controlled consumer cooperatives. This has been effected by permitting peasants who sell their products to the State to buy industrial and consumer goods at low State prices. For example, for each ton of sugar beets delivered to the State, contract producers will be able to purchase two kilos of sugar and three meters of cotton textiles.

To encourage livestock breeding, the regime also has introduced a number of incentives. These include such measures as exempting new kolkhozes from meat and wool deliveries for their first two agricultural years; granting kolkhoz peasants credits to purchase a milk cow for their private household plots; giving premiums to kolkhozes which overfulfill targets set for animal breeding and production of meat, milk and eggs; reducing meat deliveries by 50 percent for independent farmers with a maximum of three hectares of arable land; and lowering milk delivery quotas for holdings which conclude State contracts for rearing and fattening of calves. The seriousness of the livestock situ-

Kulaks:

"The working class helps working peasants in their fight against kulak exploitation. Continuing the policy of containment of kulaks, the Party and Government condemn at the same time acts of infringement of the people's legal rights, the abuses committed in . . . collecting quotas and taxes, which lead to decreased agricultural production, harming the national economy. The Party and Government will multilaterally encourage peasant farms which, without exploiting outside manpower, contribute to the increase of agricultural production."

Gheorghiu-Dej, August 23, 1953

ation is suggested by the regime's detailed plans for improvements and the numerous complaints in the press about the slaughtering of young animals, the inadequate care taken of livestock and the lack of interest in raising horses. On December 31, 1953, *Scintea* (Bucharest) published the livestock targets for 1956: by that time the number of horned cattle is to increase from 4,767,000 in 1953 to 4,930,000; horses from 1,200,000 to 1,240,000; hogs from 3,532,000 to 4,600,000; and sheep from 11,513,000 in 1948 to 13,800,000.

The regime's overall farm policy is designed to continue collectivization by pushing formation of new agricultural associations. Kolkhozes and peasant associations will be given special privileges in order to attract the independent peasantry and, in the meantime, kulaks will be tolerated so that they can contribute to farm production. In a speech on November 6, 1953, Sorin Toma, chief editor of *Scintea*, voiced the regime's attitude towards kulaks when he said: "It must be understood that the interests of the national economy demand that the measures for limiting kulak exploitation be applied to the letter; but, at the same time, kulaks must be given the possibility of carrying out their productive activities under conditions stipulated by law." As for the "socialization" of agriculture, which at this point totals less than 25 percent of the arable land, *Scintea* (Bucharest), January 14, 1954, declared: "Our Party strongly rejects the pernicious idea of lack of interest in the socialist transformation of agriculture, and expects Party organs and members to widely disseminate political enlightenment to attract peasants to agricultural associa-

tions." This theme was reiterated on April 19 by Gheorghiu-Dej at the plenary session of the Central Committee and, along with boosting farm production, remains one of the Party's chief tasks.

Living Standard

The measures taken to improve the national welfare represent, in part, an effort to give workers incentive to increase industrial output. The concessions have included income and real estate tax reductions, as well as a revision of the wage and pension systems, and decrees granting loans and credits for new housing construction. Significantly, no announcement has affected the price of food and consumer goods, although such reductions probably would have given a great boost to popular morale. The failure to cut the prices of food and consumer items is probably due chiefly to the shortage of these commodities. Romania is the only Satellite country still on the ration system, and while food and light industrial goods cost less on a rationed market than they do on a free market, most consumers are forced to frequent the latter to satisfy their needs. That the regime expects to abolish rationing in the near future was indicated by Central Committee member Sorin Toma, who was quoted by *Scintea* (Bucharest), November 7, 1953, as saying: "The increase in the production of consumer goods and the measures taken for the stimulation of exchange between town and village will make it possible to improve the supply to the population, to eliminate ration books during 1954, and, in the future, to reduce prices periodically."

Perhaps the most significant concession affecting the living standard was a revision of the wage system* which provided for pay increases for workers in the food, textile, oil and light industries, as well as those employed in the medical and sanitary services. These decrees, published in November and December of 1953 revealed, without giving too many details, a specific trend—that of re-installing the piece-work system whereby bonuses will be granted for overfulfillment of daily norms. The purpose of these measures seems to be to raise production, particularly that of consumer goods, through increased labor productivity and decreased production costs. The re-establishment of the piece-work system probably is based on the assumption that it will provide opportunity for tighter control over individual output and for increasing competition among workers, who will be given "personal" and "material" incentives to exceed labor norms.

The income tax reductions** announced on November 27, for workers, technicians, engineers, office employees and men of letters, art and science, were also introduced as a means of creating "another stimulus for increased labor productivity, expansion of the piece-work system, and improved production of consumer goods for the working people." Although it was announced that the decree was designed to narrow the progressive scale of taxation, those



Title: Animals Which Must Disappear.

Caption: The Kangaroo, or one who produces statistics from his sleeve.

Urzica (Bucharest), February 28, 1954

* For details on these decrees see January 1954 issue, pp. 51-52, and March 1954 issue, p. 49.

** *Scintea* (Bucharest), November 27, 1953.

Income Tax Scale

Monthly Salary	500 lei	750 lei	1,000 lei	2,000 lei	2,500 lei
Old Tax	?	10.7 pc.	14 pc.	20 pc.	35 pc.
New Tax	?	7.6 pc.	9.5	12.5	16
Pay increase after reduction	2 pc.	3.1	4.3	7.5	10
The same in currency	10.25	22.25	43.25	148.25	475

who nevertheless benefit most from the measure are high Party functionaries in the upper income brackets. On the basis of regime claims that the average reduction will amount to thirty percent, the above table has been computed showing the actual effects of the reduction. It is important to note that although the table begins with a monthly salary of 500 *lei*, the average monthly wage in Romania is somewhere between 300 and 500 *lei*, and, according to the new decree, the minimum taxable sum is 200 *lei*.

Cutting Expenses:

"So that all these steps [to raise the living standard] should at the same time result in a rise of the real salaries of workers and employees it is necessary to fight uninterruptedly for the reduction of cost prices and the increase of labor productivity. . . . The greater the success obtained in the increase of labor productivity . . . and the reduction of cost prices, the more will prices of all goods be reduced, and the people's living standard and the real salaries of workers and employees be increased."

Gheorghiu-Dej, August 23, 1953

The regime stated that the tax reductions will cost the State 360 million *lei* in revenue. Were the money to be divided equally among the three million wage earners in Romania, each worker would receive about 10 extra *lei* per month—that is, less than two dollars at the official exchange rate.

The rent reductions announced by the regime probably will not have a great effect on the population at large because rents are one of the few items in Romania which have remained relatively low under the Communist regime. The recent rent decree limits rent on "legally-defined living space" to seven to ten percent of the worker's monthly gross wages or of his total monthly taxable income. In no case is rent to be higher than 350 *lei* per month. Since refugee reports on housing conditions state that the worker has suffered more from the inadequacy of living quarters than from their cost, those who will most likely get the full benefits of the decree are at present members of the Communist hierarchy who have paid over 350 *lei* per month for a luxurious apartment.

The decrees facilitating construction of new dwellings provide for the granting of long-term loans* to kolkhoz members as well as to workers, technicians, govern-

ment employees, doctors, teachers and members of the health service staff. The law was designed to aid not only the construction of private homes but also apartment houses which will be built on a cooperative basis. Naturally, the regime has instituted an order of precedence, whereby credits will be granted first to stakhanovites, university laureates, production leaders, innovators and inventors. Nevertheless, the new system of credits will probably help in improving some of the present unsatisfactory housing conditions.

In addition to these measures, the regime declared a 20-25 percent reduction of real estate taxes, and revised the pension system, chiefly by lowering the age requirement and extending pension benefits. While the living standard concessions are intended to prove to the people that the regime is genuinely interested in their welfare, it is evident that the concessions are limited in scope. The supply of consumer goods and food is still low, and prices on the open market are high. Until, and if, supplies can be radically increased and costs decreased, the average Romanian citizen cannot expect any great benefits from the New Course.

The Party

The Party's New Course tasks were enunciated by Premier Gheorghiu-Dej at an April 19 plenary session of the Party Central Committee. The Premier announced at this meeting that in accordance with the principle of collective leadership, members of the Secretariat henceforth will be barred from government posts—a decision made earlier in Poland and Bulgaria. Gheorghiu-Dej resigned his post as Secretary of the Central Committee and the office was abolished. Gheorghe Apostol took over the newly-created post of First Party Secretary and became, in effect, the new official Party boss. These changes follow a gradual reorganization of the government begun last September and conducted with a minimum of publicity.* The first sign of this switch was the ouster of Deputy Premier George Vidrascu last fall; then, Minister of the Metallurgic Industry, Carol Loncar, was dismissed, and several ministries merged in accordance with the Soviet post-Beria pattern. Although it is difficult to discern a trend in the selection of the new leadership, it is clear that the Communists have attempted to realign the power structure.

In his speech to the plenary session Gheorghiu-Dej also announced that the Party Congress, originally scheduled for last March, had been postponed to October 30, 1954, so that "Party organizations can concentrate all their efforts on achieving the objectives set by the Party and govern-

* The credits for housing are granted through the factory, institution or enterprise in which the worker is employed, and he is required to build near his work place. This will have the effect of preventing labor migration.

* See November 1953 issue, p. 10, December 1953 issue, p. 45, January issue, p. 51 and March 1954 issue, pp. 48-49.

ment in developing the economy and raising the living standard of those who toil." Gheorghiu-Dej emphasized that to ensure fulfillment of the economic plan, Party work must be improved: the Party must strengthen internal discipline, install collective leadership, develop criticism and self-criticism and strengthen its ties with the masses. In discussing Party shortcomings, the Premier remarked:^{*}

"In the organizational life and propaganda activities of many Party organizations, formalistic and bureaucratic work methods have still not been uprooted . . . and the excessive number of meetings of all kinds still have not been brought to an end. Much must be done so that propaganda and mass political work become more lively, more concrete and more closely linked with the vital problems of Party and State policy. . . . There are still serious weaknesses with regard to implementation of Party decisions. . . . Poor control [of the implementation of decisions] . . . leads to a weakening of the prestige of Party organs and of the authority which Party decisions must have in the eyes of members and non-members."

The Premier declared further that it was vitally important to strengthen Party organizations in factories, plants, mines and oil enterprises. "Party organizations in industry must concentrate all their efforts on fulfillment of the 1954 plan . . . and carry out permanent control . . . so that there can be no deviation whatsoever from plan provisions." The Party's program consists in increasing production and labor productivity, lowering production costs, ensuring full use of machinery, better quality production and strict economy in the use of finances and raw materials—"all of which is the only just way to raise the working people's living standard." As for agriculture, the Premier insisted that Party organizations must strengthen political and organizational work for increasing production, for "constantly improving—on the basis of the working peasant's free consent—the 'Socialist sector' of agriculture, and for consolidating Party ties with the broadest masses of poor and middle peasants. The fight for the constant upswing of farm and

* Gheorghiu-Dej's speech was reported by Radio Bucharest, April 19.

Ties with the Masses:

"All too little was done to organize around every basic organization a broad non-Party aktiv, which should be a powerful link between the Party and the masses of working peasantry. There should be no doubt that . . . there is such an aktiv around basic village organizations. Deputies and non-Party agitators, youth workers, women delegates, collective peasants, peasants, peasants in partnership and working peasants with individual farms, leaders in agricultural production, teachers, agronomists, doctors, people near the Party and honest cadres devoted to the Party from the State apparatus and the cooperatives—all these are a powerful basis of support for Party organizations."

Gheorghiu-Dej, April 19, 1954

livestock production is not a temporary campaign but a permanent Party task—one of the basic elements of its economic policy."

On the basis of Gheorghiu-Dej's report, it is clear that the Communists are relying on the Party to insure success of New Course plans. Although the regime has granted certain concessions in agriculture and the living standard, these measures have been designed primarily as incentives to increase production. Whether workers and peasants will be tempted to give greater cooperation to the regime remains to be seen. The peasants apparently realize that the Communists still intend to collectivize the land, and the workers still suffer from the food shortage and high labor norms. Further, although the Communists have altered their investment program, heavy industrial targets are still high. It is interesting to note, too, that since January 1954, the regime has embarked on a program of expanding trade with countries outside the Iron Curtain. Agreements have been signed with Egypt, Austria, West Germany, Turkey, India, Denmark, Iceland, Indonesia and Argentina. Romania's exports are to consist chiefly of oil products, lumber, cement, windowpanes, machinery and tractors, while imports are concentrated on food products and cotton. This will probably increase the amount of consumer goods on the market, but it is evident that the Communists will have to produce a surplus of tractors if they are to fulfill their trade agreements and at the same time mechanize agriculture; the same applies to the production of cement, lumber and glass, which are necessary if the regime is to carry out its housing projects.

Like all the other Soviet orbit countries, Romania has attempted to resolve some of its problems by promulgating the New Course. So far, however, these new economic policies have served primarily to reveal Communist failures and shortcomings, rather than actually remedying them. Nor does it seem likely in the foreseeable future that the Communists will be able to focus sufficient popular cooperation and managerial competence within their authoritarian structures to make any thoroughgoing reform possible.

The Party:

"A determined fight must be waged against violation of internal Party democracy. . . . A courageous attitude of self-criticism towards mistakes must be cultivated and criticism from below must be stimulated. . . . Any attempts to throttle the opinions of the working people and to intimidate those who criticize are categorically prohibited and must be punished by the Party. . . . We must categorically state that we shall combat any manifestation of the cult of the individual. . . . Whoever he is, whatever his responsible work, one or another person cannot replace the Party, cannot replace the collective force and wisdom of the Party. The cult of the individual must be completely liquidated as incompatible with Marxist-Leninist teaching and ideology."

Gheorghiu-Dej, April 19, 1954

Internal Trade and Consumer Goods in Czechoslovakia

This is the second of a series of articles on internal trade and consumer goods in the Satellite countries. If the New Course is to function these are crucial areas in which to watch developments.

NOWHERE in the Soviet bloc is information and data concerning actual production goals, achievements, and shortcomings shrouded in more secrecy than in Czechoslovakia. The April 1951 issue of *Hospodar* (Prague) reflected the regime policy in this field, "Statistics is not a mathematical science, but a social science and a tool in the class struggle." It stated that "as long as capitalism existed, [the regime] must be very careful in publishing statistics."

A country which inherited the industrial hub of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Czechoslovakia was, on the eve of the March 1948 coup, well on her way to regaining her pre-war position of one of Europe's more prosperous small countries. She was in the very advantageous position of being able to supply her neighbors, both to the East and West, with the badly needed equipment and supplies to rebuild their ravaged and war-damaged industries. Because of the Communist putsch, after 1948 Czechoslovakia was forced, under Soviet pressure, to orient her trade almost exclusively to the East. At the same time she was compelled to revise the internal structure of her industry. Fundamentally, this revision took place because: (a) Communist policy called for emphasis on heavy industrial production; (b) many of her consumer goods industries depended on the free world for either a raw material base (shoes and textiles) or for a market (crystal, porcelain, jewelry, hops).

In 1947, Czechoslovakia initiated her first post-war plan (1947-1948). No overall results on the fulfillment of this Two Year Plan were ever actually announced, because the plan was not fulfilled. Agricultural production and the



Title: *Dikobraz asks too: "Doesn't this remind you of someone you know?"*

Caption: How the director of a textile plant dresses himself up. (His percentage fulfillments he holds in front of him, but when he turns his back, his seams are split and the cotton holding his jacket together spells quality.)

food processing industry fell well below the planned level, while textiles and chemical targets were reported to have been fulfilled by only 97.6 and 99 percent respectively (1949 Budget Speech). The following are the only announced results on the 1948 level of consumer goods production: for the individual industrial sectors (1937 = 100)¹; glass (86.7); paper (95.6); woodworking (77.0); textiles and clothing (76.5); leather and rubber (112.1); printing (110.2). No results were published for the level of production in the food industry which, as previously stated, was considerably below the planned level.

It was not until several years after the completion of the Two-Year Plan that the 1948 industrial production index was actually announced. Up to that time the regime contended that the Plan had been overfulfilled. A Czechoslovak pamphlet, *From Two-Year to Five-Year Plan*, containing the 1949 New Year's address of President Klement Gottwald, quoted him as saying: "We have completed the Two-Year Plan, and we can say with satisfaction that it has proved successful. By the end of November, fulfillment of the industrial target (excepting the food industry) was 101.3 percent [over 110]." This figure is contradictory to the eleven month average of the actual industrial production indices (without the food industry) as given in the third quarterly issue of *Prubeh Plneni Hospodarskeho Planu* (Prague), February 1949, which was 107.1 (the Two-Year Plan goal [with the food industry] was 110). It also indicated that the food industry index for that same period

¹ SOURCE: *Czechoslovakia on the Road to Socialism*, Orbis (Prague), May 1949. (Presented by the editorial team of *Rude Pravo* to the 9th Congress of the CPCS.)

Development of Industrial Production¹

	Total Production			Producer Goods			Consumer Goods			
	Index ² (1937 = 100)	Index (1948 = 100)	Per Capita Output		Index (1948 = 100)	Value	% of Total	Index (1948 = 100)	Value	% of Total
			(1937 = 100)	Value						
1948 (Two Year Plan Goal)	3110.0	—	—	3288.0	84.6	137.5	47.7	124.2	150.5	52.3
1948	4108.7	4100.0	122.0	284.6	100.0	163.9	557.6	100.0	120.7	542.4
1949	4126.0	4115.9	—	329.9	—	—	—	—	—	—
1950	4145.6	4133.9	—	381.2	—	—	—	—	—	—
1951 ⁶	4167.3	4153.9	—	438.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
1952 (Plan) ⁶	4202.8	4186.5	—	530.9	—	—	—	—	—	—
1952	4198.9	7182.1	—	518.3	—	—	—	—	—	—
1953 (Original Five Year Plan)	173.4	3157.0	3180.0	3454.0	166.0	228.3	50.3	150.0	225.8	49.7
1953 (Revised Five Year Plan) ⁸	215.2	198.0	—	563.5	9216.4	854.7	62.9	173.0	208.8	37.1
1953	5219.0	5202.0	247.0	574.8	218.5	358.1	562.3	179.5	216.7	537.7

¹ SOURCES: *The First Czechoslovak Economic Five-Year Plan* (Prague), July 1949; *Czechoslovak Economic Bulletin* (Prague), Dec. 1, 1951, Jan. 15, 1952, May 1, 1952, Feb. 15, 1953; *Planned Economy in Czechoslovakia* by Drs. Josef Goldmann and Josef Flek (Prague), Sept. 1949; *For a Lasting Peace*, (Bucharest), April 23, 1954, article by Chairman of the State Planning Commission Pucik. All figures are rounded off to the nearest tenth and are not forced to add. Values are at constant 1948 prices.

² The 1937 production index, using 1929 (the best pre-war year) as a base of 100, was equal to 96.3, as stated both in the *Planned Economy in Czechoslovakia* and in *An Economic Review of the Year 1937 in Czechoslovakia*, (Prague), 1938.

³ Figures from *The Czechoslovak Economic Five-Year Plan*. All indices for the Original Five-Year Plan are based on 1948 planned, rather than actual, production.

⁴ Figures from the *Czechoslovak Economic Bulletin*.

⁵ Figures from the Five-Year Plan results (Radio Prague, April 14, 1954).

⁶ *Czechoslovak Economic Bulletin* of Jan. 15, 1952 gave the share of heavy industry in gross industrial output as 49 percent during 1951 as against 55 percent planned for 1952.

⁷ An adjusted figure. The Feb. 1, 1953 *Czechoslovak Economic Bulletin* gave the percent of increase in production over 1951 as 18.3 percent, while they gave the 1952 production index (1948=100) as 183.

⁸ Figures taken or computed from the revised Five-Year Plan goals as given in the Government Five-Year Plan Act of April 10, 1951, and in *Rude Pravo* Feb. 27, 1951.

⁹ The revised plan gave the projected 1953 production index for heavy industry as 233. However, in this case it is felt that the terms producer goods and heavy industry are not interchangeable.

was equal to only 66.8, while the index for total industrial production (including the food industry) was 101.5. The fourth quarterly issue of this publication was never released, as it would have had to reveal that the 1948 level of industrial production was considerably below the planned level of 110 and, even after removing the production index for the food industry, which was pitifully low, the goal was not achieved.¹

I. Consumer Goods

Consumer goods production and internal trade were among the principal sectors of the economy that the New Course was designed to revitalize. Regime policy on this

subject was contained in recent speeches by Premier Siroky (Radio Prague: January 28, March 16, March 30), Chairman of the State Planning Commission Pucik (Radio Prague: January 22, April 14), Minister of Internal Trade Krajcir (Radio Prague: January 28), and in the original government decree "to raise the standard of living" (Radio Prague: September 16, 1953).

In his report on the fulfillment of the Five-Year Plan, Pucik presented several interesting figures on Czechoslovak industrial progress.¹ The table above compares these results with actual production during recent years and with the Five-Year Plan goals.

The 1953 plan goals went through several revisions. The following table traces the planned 1953 indices for overall industrial production, as well as for producer and consumer goods and indicates how substantially heavy industrial production goals were expanded, while those for consumer goods production were only revised upwards slightly. The second table below specifically traces the planned goals for consumer goods production, for those industries under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Food In-

¹ It must be borne in mind that all Communist indices include rejects and second and third-grade merchandise, as well as first-quality equipment.

dustry and the Ministry of Light Industry. Food production exceeded its goal (the 1948 level was approximately 66.8 percent of pre-war), while light industrial production fell below the planned level. In all probability, handicraft production made substantial gains in order to raise overall consumer goods production to 79.5 percent over the 1948 level.

Five-Year Plan Goals¹

	Total Production	Producer Goods	Consumer Goods
Original Plan ²	157	166	150
First Revision	161	170	150
Second Revision	198	233	173

Five-Year Plan Goals¹

	Food Industry	Light Industry
Original Plan ²	179.0	—
First Revision	161.7	149.1
Second Revision	173.0	173.0
1953 Production	186.6	143.0

An analysis of industrial production³ during recent years indicates that consumer goods production has been greatly deemphasized throughout in favor of producer goods. For example, *The Czechoslovak Economic Five-Year Plan* stated in 1948:

"The planned rise in living standards could not be achieved without [the] expansion and transformation of the economy, nor could living standards even be maintained at the present level. The traditional Czechoslovak export commodities, textiles, ceramics and glass can no longer be sold abroad in sufficient quantity to defray the import of essential raw materials and food required for the expansion of production and the maintenance of living standards of the population. Only a transformation of the Czechoslovak economy on the lines stated, will enable us to export the products for which there is a stable market (particularly in the 'countries with planned economies) and thus make sure of the required volume of essential imports."

The above statement is a far cry from Minister of Foreign Trade Dvorak's public pronouncement last September, decrying the fact that Czechoslovakia's traditional export

¹ SOURCES: *The Czechoslovak Economic Five-Year Plan*; The Government Five-Year Plan Act of April 10, 1951; *Rude Pravo*, Feb. 27, 1951. In each case production for 1948=100.

² The original plan indexes were computed on the anticipated 1948 production, while the revised goals were computed on actual 1948 production, which was slightly under the planned goal.

³ In industrial production a distinction is drawn between heavy and light industries. Heavy industry includes all branches which manufacture producer goods. They are: foundries, metals, coals, some branches of chemicals and minerals, and the production of electrical energy for industry. The term producer goods is applied to all goods which serve the needs of industrial or agricultural production, as, for example, machines, tools, energy, raw materials, etc. Light industry consists of all branches which produce consumer goods articles or articles for everyday use. In this category belong food processing, textiles, leather, wood, some branches of mineral and chemical manufacture (salt, soap, etc.), paper, and printing. (Maria Czczanska, *Polish Geography* [Warsaw], 1951).

industries, such as the Bata shoe plant, had to operate at part capacity owing to scarcity of raw materials. Recently, other Czechoslovak announcements have called for improved and increased production in the glass and ceramics industries and in the breweries, all traditional export industries.

The situation may be summed up as follows: although industrial production has substantially increased over the pre-war period, agriculture is considerably below the pre-war level. And despite the fact that the population has shown a 12.3 percent decrease over the pre-war period, resulting food and consumer goods production and raw material imports (for light industrial production) are inadequate to supply both the home and the export markets. At the root of the whole problem are two factors: too great a percentage of the national product has been devoted to investment in heavy industry (according to New Course pronouncements some scaling down will take place); and the bulk of the country's foreign trade has been channeled in the direction of the USSR and the other satellites¹ with the result that Czechoslovakia must pay exceedingly high prices for the majority of her import items, while receiving substantially lower prices for her principal exports. In other words, terms of trade which were definitely in her favor as an industrial producer are now reversed through Komekon price manipulations.

Five Year Plan Results

In the Five-Year Plan Report, absolute production figures for particular consumer goods products were either not presented, or were given in non-comparable units. For example, 1953 production results for cotton, linen, and silk textiles were given (in millions of meters) as: 347, 48, and 44 respectively. This was purported to be a 24 percent increase in cotton cloth production, 38 percent in linen cloth, and 67 percent in silk cloth over 1948. Previously, figures for the volume of production and the 1953 goals for the textile industry were presented in metric tons only. The 1953 target called for the following increases in the value of production over 1948 (percent of increase in parentheses): cotton fabrics (71); linen fabrics (49); silk fabrics (195).

The Plan report also presented production results attained in selected industrial sectors. The following chart compares these results with the 1953 planned goal and actual production during 1937.²

Industry	Plan	Production	Production
	1953	1953	1953
(1948=100)			
woodworking . . .	141	110	84.7
paper	159	152	145.3
glass	112	121	97.1

¹ Relaxation in this field is also contemplated. A reliable confidential report in December 1953 reported that Czechoslovak exports to satellite countries are to be reduced 10 percent, while those to the West are to be increased similarly.

² SOURCES: *Czechoslovakia on the Road to Socialism* (Prague), May 1949; Radio Prague, April 14, 1954; *The Czechoslovak Economic Five-Year Plan* (Prague), July 1949.

Despite substantial industrial achievements during the Five-Year Plan period, production in the woodworking and glass industries is still below the 1937 pre-war level. Other results presented (1948=100) were: consumer textile industry (139); ready-made clothes (200); leather industry (119); porcelain and ceramics (128). None of the aforementioned industrial sectors, however, are comparable to results issued during previous years. For example, the leather industry was always grouped together with the rubber industry. The 1953 planned index (1948=100) for this entire sector was 143. In all probability, the joint production results for the leather and rubber industry were considerably below the announced index of 119 for leather alone. This appears to be evident from the fact that no results were published on rubber industry production, and that imports of raw rubber have necessarily been curtailed during recent years because of severe dollar shortages as well as East-West trade restrictions and western strategic controls. Results for the textile and the clothing industry are also non-comparable with previous years, because formerly these industries were grouped together. The original Five-Year Plan goal called for a 1953 production index (1948=100) for the entire industry of 168. Likewise, porcelain and ceramics were previously grouped together in one sector with building materials. The 1953 planned index for this sector (1948=100) was originally projected as 159.

It was announced in the Five-Year Plan results that "production in the Socialist foodstuffs industry increased 83 percent in 1953 in comparison with 1948." It is interesting to note that the word *Socialist* appeared in the Czechoslovak newspaper and Radio Prague reports on the plan fulfillment, but was omitted from the *For A Lasting Peace* version. This increase is not as meaningful as we might be led to believe because: (a) not all the foodstuff industry in 1948 fell within the "Socialist sector." Since that time it has been completely nationalized. Therefore, the facilities added through nationalization could account for a considerable portion of the reported production increase; (b) foodstuffs production during 1948 was particularly poor, owing to the disastrous 1947 harvest, and to the disruption of the industry due to nationalization. As previously stated, the 1948 production index for the foodstuffs industry, projected on a basis of the first 11 months (1937=100), was only equal to 66.8.

The following are the only new facilities of the foodstuffs industry¹ reported to have been established during the Five-Year Plan period: (a) ten large deep-freezing plants; (b) 46 production processing refrigeration units (apparently refrigeration units installed in food industry plants where refrigeration was found necessary); (c) 30 dairies with five dried-milk processing branches; (d) seven large bakeries; (e) one sugar refinery.

No actual production figures were given for industrial consumer goods production. However, figures were presented on a number of selected goods sold internally during the Five-Year Plan period (1949-1953). These figures are compared below with actual production figures for 1947 and 1948 and with the Five-Year Plan goal for 1953.

Also included is the number of items planned over 1948 for internal consumption during 1953. The number of sewing machines and motorcycles purchased internally during the past five years is particularly small compared to the planned increase in internal consumption for 1953.

Production of Industrial Consumer Goods²

	1947	Plan 1948	1948	Plan 1953		
				Five-Year Plan Goal 1953	In- creased Con- sumption Over 1948	Internal Sales (1949- 1953)
Sewing Machines	76.4	100.0	104.1	155.0	50.0	144.0
Bicycles	186.0	170.0	231.5	330.0	20.0	748.0
Radio Sets	162.8	150.0	267.7	300.0	50.0	946.0
Motorcycles	39.6	50.0	68.0	75.0	50.0	138.0

II. Quantity, Quality and Variety

The Czechoslovak Communist press has been full of reports on the poor quality, lack of variety, and the scarcity of many consumer products. The lead article of the October 17 *Rude Pravo* (Prague) advocated a new drive for improving consumer goods quality. It charged that "the people have become more selective and particular—they demand high quality products, having a more refined taste corresponding to their higher standards of living." The article revealed that shortages exist in certain commodities such as: kitchen utensils, razor blades, brushes, soap flakes, etc. It blamed underproduction for these shortages, citing that "many factories are lagging behind plan in the production of consumer goods, such as the Kovosmalt factory at Bratislava with 45 percent plan fulfillment, a factory at Jecicko with 64 percent, and the Kovo works at Lysa with 71 percent." The article stated that "some factories are unable to cope with the production plan because of raw material shortages." For example, "foundries have failed to supply the required quantities of raw material for the manufacture of cans, pickaxes, shovels, etc."

The article also charged that "shoddy goods must no longer reach the market." It cited the Kovosmalt factory at Trnava for having 71 electric ovens returned, during a period of one month, as unusable. It declared that "the production of such and similar substandard articles

¹ The original Five-Year Plan target called for the establishment of thirty-five dairies and nine cheese-processing plants. It also provided for the erection of four fruit juice plants, three bakeries, six deep-freezing plants, several meat-processing plants, and 17 slaughter houses. It is not known how the facilities established during the Plan period compare to the facilities originally envisaged under the Plan program. The revised plan called for increasing the output of sugar refineries an additional 23 percent over the original plan, or 88 percent higher than 1948. In addition, it called for raising the production of butter and milk (for consumer purposes) an additional seven percent.

² *Zivnostenska Banka* (Prague), April 1949; *The Czechoslovak Economic Five-Year Plan* (Prague), 1949; *For a Lasting Peace* (Bucharest), April 23, 1954. Statistics presented in thousands of units.

ASSORTMENT



"I can't take it any more. That's the 100th woman wearing the same dress as mine."

QUALITY



"Hooray—this switch finally works!"

Sturshel (Sofia), April 16, 1954

must be considered as a violation of State discipline."

In a speech before the National Conference of Retail Trade Employees (Radio Prague, Jan. 27), Premier Siroky himself scored the production of industrial consumer goods:

"It must be stated that past shortcomings were due to insufficient productive capacity, as well as to lack of care for quality and variety of goods. Though certain important successes have already been achieved, particularly in the food industry, we still cannot be satisfied with the work of the consumer goods industry. This applies, for instance, to the engineering industry, which has not devoted sufficient attention to the production of household goods or small agricultural tools. One of the reasons for this state of affairs is the fact that some of the workers in industry have not yet rid themselves of a wrong attitude toward the production of consumer goods, failing to realize that improved living standards create a higher demand for high quality goods."

In a subsequent speech, on March 29, before the Central Committee of the CzCP (Radio Prague, March 30), Siroky echoed his earlier pronouncements:

"We cannot accept the present rate of progress in the development of consumer industries, in improving quality, and in the introduction of new products and packaging. Industrial production has created conditions under which all demands of the consumer can be met.

". . . there are shortcomings particularly in the production of electrotechnical and rubber goods [an apparent failure in the production of the rubber goods industry was indicated in the Five-Year Plan report's omission of the results achieved by this sector]. The Ministry of

Engineering does not devote sufficient attention to the introduction of new products and to the quality of manufactured goods."

Siroky demanded that the food industry improve the supply of meat, insure a wider variety of goods, and improve the quality of bread, bakery products, meat and fish products, canned goods, and cheese and other dairy products. He declared that one of the principal ways of improving consumer goods production was to make full use of proposals by the workers themselves. He further admitted that "the present system of unhealthy centralization in planning and production leads to an undermining of this initiative." In concluding his speech, Siroky called for amending the 1954 plan to insure a sufficient quantity of consumer goods for 1955.

III. Programming

On September 16, 1953, the Prague Radio announced the passing of a new economic decree "designed to raise the standard of living of the workers on the basis of a well-balanced development of the Czechoslovak national economy." This decree, the vehicle with which the regime chose to usher in its New Course program, called for: "speeding up the growth of the raw material and technical bases of heavy industry, raising the output of the food and light industries, and doing everything possible to expand agricultural production." The decree was designed as sort of a stop-gap measure "to raise the material and cultural standards enjoyed by the working people even

before the end of 1953 and to secure the proper drafting of the State Economic Plan for 1954."

Among the principal directives of the decree, the following measures were specifically aimed at expanding consumer goods production and improving the network of internal trade:

(1) The Ministry of Internal Trade was directed to increase its investments to a total of 111 million *koruny* for carrying out autumn repairs to shops and to enable the Ministry to reconstruct and enlarge existing shops with a view to converting them to the "Gastronom" type, and also to finance preparations for the construction of new department stores in 1954.

The decree called for: an increase in retail trade turnover in comparison with 1953; a reduction in consumer prices; and a further improvement in supplying the people by varying and extending assortment, by selling in the evenings, on Sundays and holidays, by establishing large department stores and shopping centers and providing them with better goods, and by an all-around care for the consumer.

(2) In the sphere of food and consumer goods supply, the decree called for: (a) an improvement in distribution of consumer goods by the State and cooperative trade—in case of need, stocks of consumer goods must be transferred from one region to another; (b) increased supplies of consumer goods and food in the countryside to obviate the necessity of country people shopping in towns. More specifically, the decree stated that "a system of deliveries of manufactured goods must be instituted in the countryside"; (c) organizing the local purchasing of surplus agricultural products—such as eggs and poultry—by the cooperative retail shops; (d) supplying the market in 1953 with all kinds of consumer goods in short supply; (e) speeding up production of more kinds of food, improving quality with particular emphasis on confectionery, bakery, and meat products; (f) producing more varieties of manufactured products, and increasing output and improving quality of manufactured consumer goods which are in great demand, such as: metal products, household articles, small washers, refrigerators, children's bicycles (particular emphasis was laid on improving the quality of soap and cosmetics); (g) introducing the sale of fractions of kilos of butter, sugar, wrapped lard, etc., and also of smaller pieces of bread (previously these items were only available in the larger quantities); (h) organizing large-scale market research, to ascertain the demands of the population and to respond smoothly to their demands, by changing the kinds of goods produced, through the close cooperation of the trade organizations with the manufacturing enterprises. The program also emphasized that industry was to prevent the production of poor quality goods, or of unnecessary products which are difficult to sell; (i) improving the milk distribution system for the larger towns, industrial areas, and in the mining region of Most, by establishing (dairy) farms in the vicinity.



Title: In many village stores, there is a shortage of necessities.
Caption: "... Buckets? Sure, we have. But they are a little small."
"..."
Sturshel (Sofia), April 2, 1954

(3) The directives also called for light industry: to exceed production plans by making greater economies in raw materials; to extend the production of consumer goods from domestic raw material sources and from by-products of the larger industrial plants; to import raw materials for textile production; to devote greater care to the increase of paper and cellulose production; to concentrate on a further, substantial increase in the quality of goods, etc.

The aforementioned program was vaguely worded, with few concrete measures to improve existing conditions. Recommendations and directives were being made but their implementation seemed to be at the mercy of the factory managements, the retail clerks, individual workers, etc., in short in the lower and middle management echelons.

On January 20, Radio Prague announced that the National Assembly had adopted a law on that day "aimed at raising the living standard 15 percent this year." Two days later Pucik disclosed the actual content of the decree in a speech before the Assembly (Radio Prague, January 22). This measure called for "improving living standards . . . increasing consumer goods output, extending the variety and quality of consumer goods, increasing the number of shops in villages, etc." The following specific measures were outlined in addition:

- (a) the chemical industry was instructed to improve the quality of the dyes produced for the textile industry so that the latter might be able to manufacture fabrics with fast colors, in designs favored by the country's women;
- (b) increase in agricultural output was marked as the decisive factor for further development of food and light industries and, in particular, increased supplies of wool and flax were called for;
- (c) subject to increased agricul-

tural production, the income of agricultural workers will be raised 18 percent—supplies of industrial goods to the village population is to be improved (No doubt this augmented income will be dependent on whether or not agricultural workers increase their output and thus their sales to the State.) ; (d) the retail trade turnover in the cooperative sector in 1954 is to be increased by about 30 percent,¹ chiefly by augmented sales of industrial products.

IV. Internal Trade

Czechoslovak retail trade is almost entirely "Socialized." The following chart traces the extent of its "Socialization" during recent years:

Share of Socialist Trade in the Total Retail Field²

1946	1948	1954
16.8%	31.3%	99.7%

Division of the State retail shops and Consumer Coops was organized along demographic lines, with urban areas primarily served by State shops, and rural areas serviced by consumer coops. The dividing line is not sharp, and here and there the two types overlap.

The State retail distribution network was created under a Government Act of December 23, 1952, which became effective on January 1, 1953. Under this act, the State is the owner of all the property, fixtures, and merchandise of the State shops. The shops are under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Internal Trade. For administrative purposes, however, the shops are independent legal entities. The position of the shop administrator is similar to a trusteeship. The Act stipulated that "activity of all these State enterprises is governed by an approved commercial and financial plan . . . which follows the State [economic] plan and the State budget."

The Consumer Coops are organized on the usual cooperative pattern, with basic membership, election of officers, etc. This entire sector falls under the jurisdiction of the Central Coop Council. Although not directly under State administration, these Coops are indirectly controlled by the State plan, through dependence on State production, assortment, uniform prices, etc. Generally speaking, both the State shops and the Consumer Coops are inelastic bureaucratic administrative units, whose primary function is to sell goods which the regime plan assign them. Over-emphasis on plan fulfillment, with more or less complete lack of interest in the needs of the consumer, has not resulted in an efficiently functioning organization. Commenting on the role played by "Socialist trade," Premier

¹ This figure was later modified by Krajcir (Radio Prague, January 28), when he stated that cooperative trade would be increased by 29.1 percent.

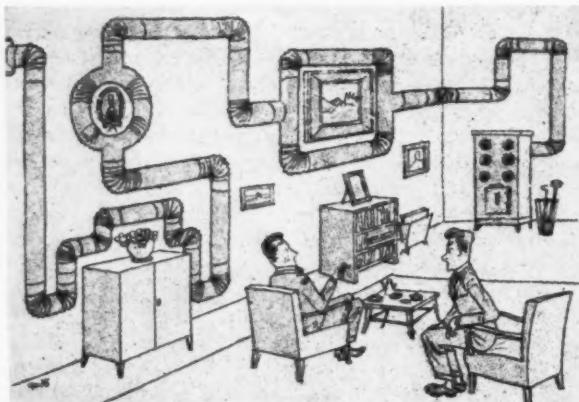
² SOURCE: *Rude Pravo*, January 28, March 10, 1954. Includes both State shops and coops. The January 28 *Rude Pravo* gave the percentage falling within the "Socialized sector" at the end of 1953 as 99.4 percent. The extent of private trade in the overall retail goods turnover is presently insignificant.

Siroky, in his January 27 address before the National Conference of Retail Trade Employees, declared:

"The working of retail trade is often the yardstick by which the workers gauge our successes in the building of Socialism. Socialist trade can fulfill its important social function only by organizing smooth and effective distribution of industrial goods and agricultural produce and by informing producers truthfully of the requirements of consumers."

"We must put an end to such incorrect theories as those stating that our trade depends on what it is given to sell. Only irresponsible workers try to make their job easy by such theories. On the contrary, Socialist trade is entitled—in fact, duty bound—to demand supplies and the production of goods of such quality and variety as are required by the people. On the other hand, it is also the duty of trade to influence consumers, to propagate, by tasteful Socialist advertising, high quality goods and nutritious food, and to lead workers to the purchase of those goods which our economy can supply in sufficient quantities."

It is particularly significant that during his speech, Siroky emphasized the functions of advertising and market research. As in all Communist countries, Czechoslovakia controls consumption through the price mechanism. However, recently consumption of certain consumer goods, sub-standard cotton textiles in particular, has not been keeping pace with production. At the same time, consumer purchases were being directed toward scarce food items, such as: meat, fats, eggs, milk, etc. The regime was thus faced with the dilemma of mounting inventories for certain consumer goods, plus extensive consumer purchasing power pointed in the wrong direction. In the face of their New Course program, the regime could not, in order to control consumption, raise the prices of those items in short supply. Their only alternative therefore was to reduce prices of those items which were meeting consumer resistance, while at the same time promoting their sale through advertising. Through this move the regime hoped to reduce inventories of those goods unsuitable for export,



Caption: "Well, you see, now stove pipes are available in any quantity—and I couldn't resist."

while at the same time absorbing the excess purchasing power.

"Socialist Merchandising"

The regime hopes to forestall any future recurrence of a similar nature by conducting market research as to consumer needs and desires. This may be interpreted as a new trend in the field of "Socialist merchandising," as a turning toward methods of the free enterprise system of a capitalist economy. Siroky declared in his speech:

"Our slogan today must be: 'Valuable money must buy valuable goods.' Every worker is fully entitled to obtain high quality goods for his money, no matter whether he is buying a refrigerator or a small toy. In order to achieve this, workers of our Socialist trade must substantially improve market research. . . . On the strength of a thorough knowledge of demand and of study of the economic situation in various regions, districts and towns, a much better and more careful distribution of goods must be arranged."

A March 23 Radio Prague broadcast elucidated further on this New Course Socialist merchandising and distribution:

"It is important to avoid the error of thinking that 'capitalist competition' helps make goods better and cheaper. On the contrary, competition in capitalist countries, in fact, often ends in monopoly and, in any case, entails enormous expenditure on advertising for which the consumer has to foot the bill. Some of this advertising is nothing short of fraudulent. . . . To make goods offered to the public cheaper, the Socialist economy employs two methods: planning, based on a careful study of consumer requirements, and Socialist competition. . . . Under Socialism, we too shall need to advertise and we shall have to resort to advertising even more as we have more goods to sell. Socialist advertising, however, is not designed to bamboozle the public, but to supply the consumer with the requisite information on the types and uses of the commodity available. . . ."

Both in his January 27 speech, and in his March 29 speech before the Central Committee, Siroky cited the various shortcomings in the realm of internal trade. In addition to inadequate market research, he revealed that "some of the shortcomings in the supply of goods are caused by the clumsy methods of transportation and distribution in the various regions." He also said that "the organization of retail shops must be improved so that speedy and good service is assured."

It must be borne in mind that distribution is one of the major problems facing the Socialist trade network and its unwieldy bureaucratic organization. For example, a letter written by a housewife which appeared in the March 4 *Svet Prace* stated:

"It's hard to believe, but here in Vyssi Brod [a town in South Bohemia] it has been impossible to purchase—for at least six months now—warm socks for children, gloves for workers, winter lingerie, warm underwear for children, or sweaters for men and women. Thus, to purchase a pair of socks, one has to make a trip to Budejovice [almost 30 miles away]. Those who cannot afford these unwanted trips, have to wait. . . ."



The slogan on the wall reads: "Please use the complaints register."
Caption: "Did you ask for the complaints register?"

Urzica (Bucharest), January 26, 1954

A subsequent report which appeared in the March 11 edition of this same paper exclaimed that "waiting in lines [for shopping] is robbing us of the little free time we have left." The article expressed hope that the regime New Course program would eventually become more effective.

In his January 27 speech Siroky also called for "raising the standard of all employees of Socialist trade so that they are able to fulfill all the tasks which Socialist development imposes upon them." He said that "the new worker in the retail trade must be highly qualified, conscientious, attentive and friendly." Obviously, these qualities were not until now inherent in the "Socialist" retail worker.

"Socialist trade" is now also to be organized along more economical lines. Siroky declared in his January 27 speech that "it is also the duty of Socialist trade to see to it that overheads are constantly lowered . . . losses due to bad or too-lengthy storage of goods must be avoided, particularly in the food trade." It continued by saying that "large economies can be achieved by improved transport of goods."

The following day Minister of Internal Trade Krajcir further outlined the new internal trade program, declaring that the aims of the new program were:

"... to fulfill the plan for increased turnover and to fulfill the economic and financial plans through a basic change in the style of work. The new organization is based on the application of the Khoerazchot Soviet business accounting system [a method of cost-accounting] on the widest possible basis, better relations with the consumer than hitherto, a constant improvement of the network of shops which in turn requires the extension of turnover, improvement of goods offered for sale, extension of the services of the communal restaurants, and the organization of agricultural markets on a wider basis."

Krajcir stated that the 1954 State Plan envisages a 10.9 percent increase in retail trade turnover. The retail turnover of cooperative trade is to be increased by 29.1 percent, while that for communal restaurants and canteens is scheduled to increase 11.4 percent. As information on planned or actual increases in retail trade turnover has not been published during recent years, it is difficult to compare these planned increases with those of former years. Not even the original Five-Year Plan law gave the figure on the envisaged retail trade turnover for 1953. The only figure available is for the 1952 plan (Czechoslovak Economic Bulletin [Prague], January 15, 1952), which gave the projected increase in retail goods turnover for 1952 as "approximately 10 percent larger than were the actual sales of consumer goods in 1951." We do not know what the 1951 level of retail goods turnover was, nor do we know whether or not the 1952 goals were ever reached, but we do know that the 1954 New Course program which is supposed to be a revolutionary expansive program, calls for approximately the same increase. The major increase is scheduled to fall within the cooperative sector of trade—in the villages and in the countryside—where conditions are particularly poor. The "expansive" retail goods turnover planned for the State shops is not stated, although the worker is scheduled to benefit under the program through expanded turnover in the communal restaurants and canteens.

V. Patterns and Conclusions

Agricultural production and the food industry seem to be the weakest links in the Czechoslovak economy. Dependence on Soviet bloc farm imports to supplement its own limited farm production has forced Czechoslovakia to curtail a considerable part of other consumer goods and raw material imports. Whatever surplus credits accrue to her from her tremendous industrial goods shipments to other Soviet bloc countries are generally absorbed by these farm imports. Although overall industrial production has shown a considerable increase in recent years, consumer goods industry has been sacrificed to the development of heavy industrial production. Nonetheless, equipment available for internal use is still inadequate and not even enough agricultural equipment has been allotted internally to spur farm production.

Despite population decreases and a reported overall increase in consumer goods industries, the supply of consumer goods available for internal consumption is still greatly inadequate. Some consumer goods are available, but their purchase is controlled by excessively high prices. Successive price reductions and currency reforms have tended only to lower the Czechoslovak people's standard of living, wiping out savings, raising prices, and thus limiting consumption. This lowering of the real income is apparently part of the coordinated KOMEKON plan to level the standard of living throughout the entire Soviet block. Czechoslovak worker resistance as reflected in poor productivity, indifference to quality, and ultimately in the eruption of the June riots, forced the Communists to the New Course. This new program offers some improvement in the supply of consumer goods, provided that production increases commensurately. A slight reemphasis on consumer goods production has taken place but heavy industrial production is being maintained at the same level. The percentage of national income devoted to investment may be scaled down somewhat, with slight increases in expenditures earmarked for agricultural and consumer goods investments, but until the Communists can produce the food, shoes, clothing, and other commodities that the people require, their internal trade and consumer goods problems will continue to plague them.

The Tragic Sense

A school teacher asked her pupils which one of them could give a definition of tragedy.

A small boy got up and said, "When two streetcars collide and people are killed, that is a tragedy." "No," said the teacher, "that is not tragedy; it is an unfortunate accident—a misfortune."

Another boy got up and said, "If a ship with a valuable cargo sinks, that is a tragedy." "No, it is only a loss," said the teacher.

Then a third boy got up and said, "The death of Stalin is a tragedy."

"That is a good definition," said the teacher. "Can you explain why this is tragedy?"

"Because the death of Stalin is neither misfortune nor loss," replied the little boy.

Collective

Leadership

"Iron discipline in the Party is inconceivable without unity of will, without complete and absolute unity of action on the part of all members of the Party."

Stalin, 1924

EVER SINCE the death of Stalin the so-called "principle of collective leadership" has become part of the operating dogma of international Communism. In the Soviet Union, in the Satellites, in the Communist Parties of Asia, as well as in the West, the cult of the all-powerful individual was officially interred with Stalin. Party theory was radically altered, official attitudes reshaped and history reinterpreted to take into account new power relations in the Kremlin. What these new power relations are is still obscure, although an apparent equilibrium with no leader capable of assuming single command is one of the chief components. But collective leadership is more than a description of new power relationships, or the inability of some leader to seize individual control: it is now also an enunciated policy to be organizationally embodied. Among the top leadership in the Soviet Union and in the Satellites, a collective leadership already seems to be a matter of fact, although paradoxically enough, this collectivity is at the very core of one of history's greatest despotisms, and its extent differs from country to country. With the peculiarly logical illogicality of the Communists, the same "collective leadership" does not apply to intra-Soviet-bloc relations—all Party roads still lead to Moscow—nor has there been a relaxation of the Soviet control even to the point of making the USSR *primus inter pares*.

The Background of Democratic Centralism

"In order to function properly and to guide the masses systematically," Lenin said,* "the Party must be organized on the principle of centralism, having one set of rules and uniform Party discipline." After the Party had gained power, the notion of "Party democracy" became a tactical camouflage and was gradually subverted by Communist "substitutism": the substitution of the soviet for the people, the Party for the soviet, the Central Committee for the Party, the Politburo for the Central Committee, and finally the dictator for the Politburo. The phrase "democratic centralism" continued to be a part of official doctrine and,



Title: Comrade-in-Armor.

The armor is made up of plates inscribed: directives, circulars, bulletins, laws, decrees, etc.

Szpilki (Warsaw), April 25, 1954

as defined in the *History of the CPSU*,** was supposed to include the following:

1. All directing bodies of the Party, from top to bottom, shall be elected;
2. Party bodies shall give periodical accounts of their activities to their respective Party organizations;
3. There shall be strict Party discipline and the subordination of the minority to the majority;
4. All decisions of higher bodies shall be absolutely binding on lower bodies and on all Party members."

In practice, as part of the actual facts of "substitutism," only the fourth principle was really enforced: orders from above were filtered down to the lower levels where discussions when held assumed the form of military staff meetings with orders not questioned and suggestions advanced only as they concerned implementation. Party discipline was maintained because no election was ever free and because membership was carefully screened, purged and constantly

* *History of the CPSU*, International Publishers, New York, 1939, page 49.

** International Publishers, New York, 1939, page 198.

reshuffled until it became the pliable tool its Party Secretary, Stalin, wished it to be.*

Stalin's Legacy

After the dictator's much-trumpeted assumption of supreme leadership of the Soviet Armed Forces during World War II, the Stalin myth—his enthronement as "genius of all mankind," "coryphaeus of science," "beloved leader of all progressive mankind"—by far overshadowed, even on paper, the perfunctory and infrequent references to Party democracy. The end of the war found Stalin in unchallenged personal ascendancy at the head of a Party-State apparatus that grew progressively more rigid as the aging dictator grew more capricious, more stubborn and, in the Korean affair and other international forays, ever more reckless. Through the frank admissions of his successors we now know that, by his monomaniacal implementation of forced industrialization, Stalin brought the Soviet Empire to the brink of economic disaster. In the light of facts now revealed on the agricultural fiasco and in view of the revolts that flared up in Eastern Europe shortly after Stalin's demise, it is astounding that he could have checked for so long the forces seething beneath his personal control. It is possible, of course, that some of his "associates" may have detected the danger in time and, in self-defense, have done away with him. Be that as it may, it is now clear that if Stalin died a natural death, his removal came at a very convenient time.

Stalin's legacy to his heirs consisted of a political situation threatened by such diverse forces as a growing will on the part of the free world to defend itself against further encroachments, a serious internal economic imbalance, a sullen mass discontent with the miserable standard of living so harshly imposed for so long and, perhaps most serious of all, a potential defection by the very people—the "managerial aristocracy"—whose task it would be to organize the struggle for survival.

The New Leadership

In spite of the Beria interlude and the attendant purges, it appears that part of the political void was filled quickly and relatively smoothly. That it was filled with a collective leadership, and not with a one-man rule, was almost inevitable, since Stalin's position in the Communist firmament was uniquely his own, the result of a long process of gradual deification that included the removal of all real or suspected rivals. His stature also partly derived from the slowly-evolved and carefully manipulated myth which, with the passage of years, became a rigid mold from which the dictator could never have escaped while he was alive. This myth bestowed upon Stalin not only omniscience and omnipotence, but immortality too. While he lived, no reference was made to his possible or eventual death. In the

*According to the official Party history, there were only 386,000 Party members at the Twelfth Party Congress held in April 1923; a little over a year later and only four months after Lenin's death—at the Thirteenth Congress convoked in May 1924—membership had doubled, having been made to swell to 735,881. Stalin had seen to it that his will would be the will of the majority.

practical sense of power politics, such references would naturally have been unwise, since they would have encouraged the formation of factions jockeying for the succession; but in a larger sense such allusions were almost impossible, for it was in the very nature of Stalinism that he should live as a supra-human being "guiding" the people to the ultimate fulfillment of supra-human goals.

Thus, the new Kremlin leaders had to move swiftly after his death to consolidate their power and lay the foundations for a firmer future. And this they attempted to do. Much of the doctrinaire approach was discarded, many pretenses dropped, many overambitious schemes delayed or abandoned, and by the summer of 1953, a pragmatic New Course program hurriedly set in motion. The new policy recognized that—economically speaking at least—a partial retreat was necessary, that emphasis had to be shifted to a rapid shoring up of a crumbling agriculture and that consumer goods had to be made increasingly available to the people; that, from a political point of view, the terror had to be diminished to ensure easing of internal tension and to promote closer regime-mass cooperation. Internationally, the program also called for an end to the Korean war and an apparently more conciliatory attitude in foreign policy which could more effectively destroy the unity of the Western world, thus lessening pressures from outside. In short, then, the Communist leadership decreed a period of internal reorganization and consolidation.

Among the various sections of Soviet society—both in the Soviet Union and the Satellites—the New Course was probably most welcomed by the disenfranchised masses, the peasants and workers who lived in fear and poverty, in physical and spiritual degradation. It is this plight that Stalin, as master of an all-pervasive, cruelly coercive Party-State apparatus, was largely able to disregard. It is this same plight that prompted unarmed workers to face Soviet tanks in the streets of East Berlin last Summer and that provoked thousands of workers to rise in open resistance in Czechoslovakia. To the Communist leaders, the most ominous aspect of these uprisings was probably the solidarity displayed between the resisters and elements of the Party and army apparatus. While in Germany, Soviet soldiers refused to fire on workers, in Czechoslovakia members of the lower Party cadres actually led the revolt.

The Managerial Interests

The New Course, therefore, though primarily aimed at rectifying basic economic anomalies, also had to take into account the hitherto muted demands of the sprawling officialdom. These are the people who might be said to form the new managerial aristocracy. They are, in the broadest sense, Party functionaries, high and low, Army and secret police officers, technicians and members of the privileged intelligentsia, members of the professional classes, Stakhanovites and other highly-paid workers, and non-Party administrative personnel. They constitute the "brain" of the regime as opposed to the "brawn" of the oppressed peasants and workers. Under Stalin, their allegiance was insured partly through terror backed by periodic purges, and partly through the enjoyment of social prestige, the

satisfaction derived from accomplishment and privilege and, perhaps most important, the ability to satisfy some of their elementary material needs.

In some respects the demands made by this class coincided with those of the general public. They, too, no doubt, yearned for more and better consumer goods, particularly since they were financially in a better position to secure them. Their economic lot, however, was not desperate; more than material gains, it seems that they wanted a kind of political security and status and all that was involved in an end to the use of arbitrary force, a relaxation in Party autocracy and a more direct say in the formulation of policies. The people also longed for these changes but, in general, were not as affected by Party "discipline" as were Party members or State functionaries, for whom error became synonymous with treason.

Apparently recognizing the danger of a possible opposition from sections of this bureaucracy and, aware that the New Course required a "broadening of links with the masses" and a "more flexible leadership" on lower echelons, the Kremlin rulers revived the old concepts of "Party democracy" and collective leadership. The significant point, however, is that in contrast to past practice, the present use of these terms—particularly the latter one—is not entirely artifice. It now seems to represent an attempt to combine discipline and responsiveness to authority, with flexibility, initiative and the ability to act promptly and intelligently.

New Orientations

The official word for this new orientation was given by Malenkov in a speech he delivered to the Supreme Soviet on assuming the Premiership on March 15, 1953. Theoretical explanations were supplied in a *Pravda* article entitled "The Collective Principle in Party Leadership" of April 16, 1953. Slepov, the author, made the following points:

"The Party committees are organs of political leadership. They cannot apply methods inherent in administrative-managerial agencies in their practical work. There were cases of this during the war. Wartime circumstances caused certain particular features in the methods of leadership which were to some extent justified for those conditions. But this led to serious shortcomings. . . .

"One of the fundamental principles of Party leadership is collectivity in deciding all important problems of Party work. . . .

"The principle of collectivity in work means, above all, that decisions adopted by Party committees on all cardinal questions are the fruits of collective discussion. No matter how experienced leaders may be, no matter what their knowledge and ability, they do not possess and they cannot replace the initiative of a whole collective. In any collegium, in any directing collective, there are people who possess diverse experience without relying upon which the leaders cannot correct decisions and exercise qualified leadership. . . .

"Leaders cannot consider criticism of themselves a personal affront. They must be able to accept criticism



Title: The Hesitant

Caption: "I will not sit in the front row next time. One does not know how to vote."

Szabad Ifjusag (Budapest), May 9, 1954

courageously and show readiness to bend their will to the will of the collective. Without such courage, without the ability to overcome one's vanity and to bend one's will to the will of the collective, there can be no collective leadership. . . ."

After thus defining collective leadership, Slepov turns to a discussion of personal responsibility which, in somewhat illogical fashion, he relates to the principle of collective leadership. His intent, however, becomes clear when in turn he links responsibility to the concept of Party discipline. This, in other words, is the reverse side of the new political medal: Party cohesion must not be impaired and some matters must remain the exclusive province of specified officials, particularly on the high levels of Party organization. "It is necessary," Slepov states, "to know how to combine the collective principle with personal responsibility in carrying matters through . . . just as collectivity is essential in discussing basic problems, so individual responsibility is essential . . . to prevent evasion of responsibility for implementing decisions. . . ."

The combination of collective leadership and personal responsibility was introduced at the top level of Satellite leadership starting with Hungary in June, 1953. All other Iron Countries have now followed suit, with the apparent exception of Albania where so far dictator Hoxha has retained his position as topmost leader and where collective leadership is discussed only in connection with Party organizations on the middle and lower levels. In the other countries, "individual responsibility" has been structurally effected by restricting leaders to a single topmost post of authority. In practice, in view of the intimate Party-State interrelationship the switch has meant an end of the old practice whereby top leaders simultaneously held the very highest positions in both Party and State organizations. The highest State officials, of course, still belong to the highest Party organs, but they no longer head both. Thus, in Hungary, Matyas Rakosi, who had been General Secretary of the Party as well as Prime Minister, gave up his governmental post to Imre Nagy and assumed the position of

First Secretary of the Central Committee; in Bulgaria, on the occasion of the Sixth Party Congress held in February of this year, Premier Vulko Chervenkov stepped down from his post as Party Secretary General, and the corresponding post of First Secretary of the Central Committee is now held by Todor Zhivkov; in Poland, at the recent March Party Congress, Boleslaw Bierut relinquished his position as Premier and became First Secretary of the Party's Central Committee, while Jozef Cyrankiewicz filled the top governmental post; finally, in Romania, the separation of top Party and State functions occurred at an April 19 meeting of the Central Committee, when Gheorghe Apostol became First Secretary and Gheorghiu-Dej was left with the Premiership only. In Czechoslovakia, the change came as a result of Gottwald's death on March 14, 1953; Zapotocky is President, Siroky is Premier and Antonin Novotny First Secretary of the Central Committee. However, these shifts in position are not merely nominal, and as regards collective leadership are made doubly meaningful by the fact that in each case, the First Secretary is now part of a collective group: the secretariat. Although he undoubtedly remains the "first" of the members in terms of power, it is now a conclave operating rather than an individual.

Intra-Bloc Relations

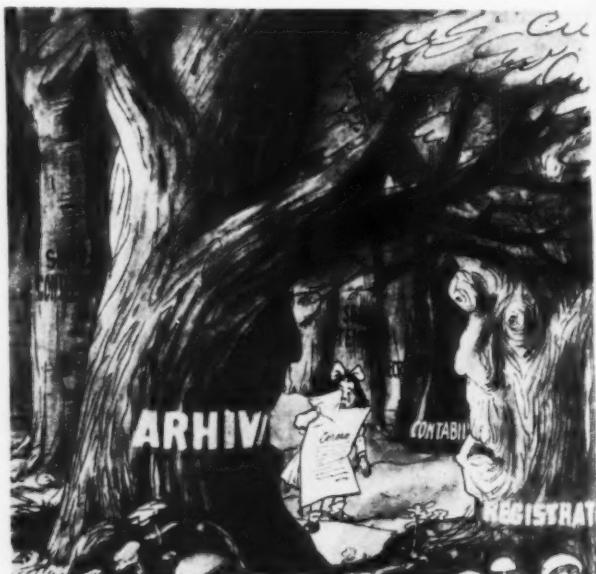
The reasons back of these changes must be sought both in the nature of conditions existing in these countries and in the relationship between them and the Soviet Union. Internally, the economic disproportions, the failure of agriculture and tensions within the Party were, on the whole, probably even more acute than in the USSR. The dislocations were in many respects similar to those in the Soviet Union in the turbulent years of the Thirties. Though mass famine did not exist and purges were more restricted and less bloody, the majority of the people in Eastern Europe had formerly enjoyed a standard of living far superior to that of Czarist Russia. Among some sections of the people discontent therefore must have been so much stronger, particularly in view of the fact that a great deal of the misery could be attributed with good reason to Soviet exploitation. As in the case of the USSR itself, this Empire could be driven to greater hardships only so long as Stalin was alive. Once the Kremlin leaders had come to recognize the necessity for abjuring terror—if only temporarily—as a means for postponing the solution of pressing problems, it was logical that the New Course program, including attempts at introducing collective leadership, should be enforced in the whole Soviet orbit. And if a partial exception to this rule applies to China, that might be so mainly because industrialization has not yet gone far enough to cause the type of imbalance prevalent in Eastern Europe, because a kind of collective leadership already existed there, and because the Soviet Union does not have the kind of intimate control over China that it has over the European Satellites.

The New Course, then, was inaugurated in the Satellite countries to deal with problems that were paramount throughout the area and that, because of the closeness of Russia's political, economic and military involvement in the area, had to be uniform, at least in broad outline.

Satellite adherence to the Soviet pattern, moreover, is also indispensable to the preservation of the "universality" of Communist dogma. What was proclaimed as "Truth" in Moscow could not be contradicted in Budapest, Bucharest, Prague, Sofia or Warsaw. Still, though these premises would explain in part both the current rash of theoretical references to collective leadership in Satellite propaganda organs, and the attempted implementation of the principle on middle and lower levels, they do not account for the changes in top bracket Satellite leadership. Why is it that the Communists were not satisfied with a *de facto* collective leadership in the Kremlin and did not maintain the "safe one-man rule in the captive countries?

One answer that suggests itself is that what was "safe" for Stalin was no longer so for his successors; that they could not afford to leave one single all-powerful individual at the helm of the countries they dominate. As a corollary, they may have wished to fashion a new structure to reflect the new power division within Russia, Khrushchev's role as representative of the CPSU at the Polish Party Congress appears to substantiate this theory of structural correspondence. In the final analysis, however, the significance of the changes must be judged as to whether they are real; that is, whether the outward curtailment of position entails an actual and simultaneous loss of personal power. If the juggling of positions is indeed artificial, then the explanation that it reflects only an aping of the Russian model may be well taken. But there is ample evidence pointing in another direction.

There is, for example, the time element involved in the introduction of the principle at the top. It seems significant that, with the exception of Czechoslovakia—where Gottwald's death coincided with Stalin's—and Hungary—



Signs on the trees: Technical Service, Accounting Department, Archives, Secretariat, Personnel, Registration Office.

Caption: The story of a petition. "Poor me, I got lost."

Urzica (Bucharest), February 28, 1954

where economic disproportions and popular discontent were most intense—collective leadership was not applied to the uppermost levels for many months after the present campaign was started. If the changes had been spurious and mere mechanical adjustment, they could easily have been made when the New Course was launched. From a tactical point of view, the move would have been excellent propaganda with which to rally the people to the new line. From the point of view of consistency it would have saved the hierarchy the difficult task of attempting to inculcate the principle at the lower levels while in fact denying it at the top.

Destruction of the Stalin Myth

Apparently Satellite leaders did not dare make the changes when it would have been most natural. They probably felt that their apparatus was not ripe for such changes, and that a lot of "explaining" would have to be done first. This concentrated indoctrination took the form of a systematic, well-planned and subtly applied destruction of the Stalinist myth. The attack was not directly leveled at Stalin himself but at what he stood for in the popular imagination. It sought to dispel the aura of an all-knowing "Great Father" at the head of the Party leading the masses to a happy life, protecting them from all dangers, and never at a loss for the right answer to all problems.

In this process of popular reconditioning, the name of Stalin is seldom mentioned, and when it is, generally in connection with Marx and Lenin. The last-named is now being given credit for having wisely adhered to the principle of collective leadership—his writings and dictatorship notwithstanding. There is an interesting, and perhaps to the Westerner, subtle qualitative change in the ways in which reference is made to Stalin. No longer is it the Great Stalin "leader of all democratic mankind," but is plain Stalin, the "continuator of Lenin's cause." In general, mention of Stalin has diminished enormously quantitatively as well, and where previously his name and picture were everywhere, they are now rarely seen. This not only differentiates the New Course leadership from the Old Course (Stalinist) terror and privation, but attempts to enlist some of the idealist fervor that had originally attached itself to Lenin in favor of the New Course program.

The following attack on the "cult of personality" was printed in the Cominform journal *For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy!* of December 11, 1953:

"The method of collective leadership is fundamentally opposed to the method of placing a personality above the collective, which stems from the idealistic conception of the cult of the individual, from the negation or underestimation of the role of the Party and the popular masses.

"The Communist and Workers' Parties and mass organizations are concentrating the fire of their criticism against one-man leadership, against those leaders who, by using methods of one-man leadership, seek to replace the Lenin method of collective leadership. . . ."

The same theme was repeated time and time again in every Satellite. For instance, an editorial in *Rabotnicheskoye Delo* (Sofia) broadcast over Radio Sofia on February 12,

stressed that "The successes achieved by the Party are due to the fact that it is constantly guided by Marxism and Leninism, that it correctly builds internal Party life on the basis of Lenin's principles for collectivism in leadership . . . the principle is in accordance with . . . the nonadmissibility of the personality cult." In Czechoslovakia, in a speech delivered, ironically enough, in commemoration of the memory of Stalin and Gottwald, Zapotocky went even further in denunciation of one-man rule. Referring to Slansky and his "treacherous menials," Zapotocky stated that they created the impression "that the leading role can be interpreted as meaning that individuals are the leading and decisive factors in the Party, factory, district, region, and so forth. . . . The pernicious results of this perverted leadership have appeared in all spheres of our State, economic and public life. *This kind of 'Fuehrer principle' is a complete denial of the Leninist principle of collective leadership.*" [Italics added]

It is important to notice that these attacks almost invariably contain references to a new type of relationship now being sought with the people. As *Scinteia* (Bucharest) of July 28, 1953 put it, "The leader must not only teach the masses but also learn from the masses; he must know how to renounce his personal vanity and subject his will to the will of the collective. . . . Only by so doing can a truly collective leadership be assured."

Initiative and the Masses

This extract illustrates a major difficulty encountered by the Communist leaders in their endeavor to "arouse the creative initiative of the Party cadres and people's masses." The old relationship had to be replaced with a new one. During the months that elapsed between the first announcement of the New Course and the actual top leadership changes in countries like Poland, Bulgaria and Romania, the psychological assault on the "Fuehrer principle" was designed to accomplish precisely such a result. The top layer of Communist leadership, in other words, had been compelled to create the type of social climate that would make demotion of certain individuals inevitable. They had to do it because the overall change in policy required it. Just as in the past, forced over-industrialization, compulsory collectivization and a calculated disregard for the people's welfare automatically required a "Fuehrer" at the head of a cowed but inhuman Party machinery, so the present situation called for a Party organism that, from the very top down to the lowest levels, maintained close contact with the people. Moreover, the old Stalinist goals were such that they could involve the Party in their very grandioseness, and produced a kind of internal-Party elan which the New Course in its limited and more expedient objectives could not furnish.

The production of consumer goods, the present comparative breather given to private farming, the new stress on individual artisan output and on consumption all automatically involved a parallel political realignment. The people had to be given channels of expressing some of their demands, and, to a limited extent, given the chance to co-



In a scientific institute there lived a highly-esteemed goose:
And it happened that a fresh wind of criticism blew.



(The bird's feathers are marked "quotations" [from the Marxist canon presumably].)

Dikobraz (Prague), October 4, 1953

operate actively in the formulation of policies which they alone could make successful. The channels of communication had to be broadened, but they also had to be altered qualitatively. No longer could the stimulus (order) from above be made to result in a response (implementation) below; the channels now had to be sensitized and attuned to a more complex variety of popular needs, tastes and desires.

These new arteries of communication could not stop at the lower or middle echelons; they had to penetrate to the very heart of the Party. It is nevertheless important to recognize that reshuffle at the top does not spell democracy. The Party did not abandon its fundamental rights and privileges and is still in firm control of the State apparatus. But the changes do correspond to additional functions now undertaken by the elite. Its decisions, though still amounting to a law unto itself, are now less arbitrary in the sense that an attempt must now be made to cope more fully with pulses transmitted from below. Functionally speaking, this task could not be undertaken by one man, and hence the present preoccupation with the authority of the Central Committee.

The shifts in the distribution of power at the top were clearly foreshadowed in the Cominform Journal (*For A Lasting Peace*) article entitled "Collective Way—Highest Principle of Leadership in Communist and Workers' Parties" of September 4, 1953. The article makes clear that the prestige, the glamor and wisdom, perhaps even the power, once the exclusive property of a single individual, would now be transferred to the Central Committee as a whole:

"The Communist Party of the Soviet Union proceeds from the fact that only the collective experience, the collective wisdom of the Central Committee . . . ensures correct leadership of the Party and of the country. . . . Following the example of the CPSU . . . the Communist Parties in the European countries of people's democracy are constantly perfecting the . . . consistent observance of the Leninist principle of leadership. . . . Their own experience teaches them that only when in the Party as a whole—from top to bottom—questions

are discussed and decided collectively and on the basis of broad self-criticism and criticism from below, only then the possibility arises of disclosing and eliminating mistakes and shortcomings in time. . . ." [italics added]

In Hungary, Lajos Acs,* member of the Politburo, wrote on the same topic under the heading of "Questions of Collective Leadership in the Hungarian Working People's Party" in an article which also appeared in *For A Lasting Peace* of September 4. Referring to the highest Party organs, he stated that ". . . with a view to insuring collective leadership, the meeting of the Central Committee once again emphasized that the Central Committee is the highest organ in between Congresses. . . . All important decisions must be discussed in detail, in the spirit of bold criticism and self-criticism by the Central Committee; all decisions must be worked out collectively and with the participation of all members of the Central Committee." A precedent for this line has already been set by Rakosi, who on July 11, a few days after he had relinquished the post of Premier, declared:

". . . our Party, and in particular its leadership, has committed grave mistakes. . . . Some of these mistakes can be attributed to wrong methods in leadership. At its meeting the Central Committee worked out measures that will in future insure a genuine collective leadership . . . an agent of international imperialism has now been unmasked in the Soviet Union in the person of Beria. . . . The lesson to draw from this is that we must be ceaselessly on guard and preserve vigilantly, as the apple of our eye, the unity, collective leadership and firm Marxist-Leninist ideological foundations of our Party. . . ."

In accusing Beria of having attempted to destroy collective leadership, Rakosi was parroting similar Soviet statements. Outwardly at least, these pronouncements seem to duplicate similar tactics adopted by Stalin when he was

* It is significant that the man to write on this topic is one of the original three, and now four, men who comprise the secretariat with which Rakosi shares the power in collegium.

eliminating his enemies. Thus, Stalin delivered a speech at the Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the CPSU in April 1926 on the subject of "Loyalty and Collective Leadership." According to the 1953 Moscow edition of *Problems of Leninism**, Stalin asserted that "Bukharin spoke here about the lack of collective leadership in the Central Committee of the Party, and asserted that the rules of collective leadership were being violated by the majority of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee." To which Stalin is supposed to have countered with the following question: "Who, except hypocrites, can deny that Bukharin, who is setting up a bloc with the Trotskyites against the Party, and who is betraying his Central Committee, does not want to and will not implement collective leadership in the Central Committee of the Party?" Continuing in this vein, Stalin then directed his attack against Rykov, who had also spoken about the lack of collective leadership. Stalin berated him for: 1. having shipped gold to the United States (presumably to further trade); 2. having entered into negotiations with an American bank for the settlement of claims that had arisen as a result of the nationalization of its properties; 3. having supplied machinery to "kulaks and middle peasants." It is significant that Stalin, in posing as a defender of collective leadership, was accusing his adversaries of having tried to effect an easing in internal tensions and external pressures very similar to the present New Course program.

The Authority Transfer

The obvious difference in invoking the principle lies in the functional use to which it was put in the two periods. For Stalin, the reference was a means to consolidate his personal power; his distortion of the concept provided him with a rationale for implementing his program. That program, as pointed out before, could not be carried out by a collective leadership. For the present rulers of the Kremlin, the opposite is true. Just as the lack of a single all-powerful figure precipitated the advent of the New Course so, in turn, carrying out the program required that collectivity be maintained. More than that, since power relations are never altogether static, collective rule, once established, was bound to gather momentum, both in response to outside pressures and as a result of forces generated from within the new relationship.

Though the switches in the labels of authority (for instance, the replacement of the title of General Party Secretary by that of First Secretary of the Central Committee) and the juggling of positions (the separation of top Party and State posts in countries where Party supremacy is largely an established fact and the differentiation is ever more academic), may not have been intended to effect changes in existing power relations, they appear to have set off a chain reaction leading to precisely such a result. What effect, for instance, does a change from "Comrade Chervenkov teaches us . . ." (*Rabotnicheskoe Delo*, January 20, 1953) to "The Party teaches us . . ." (same paper, February 1, 1954) have on the Party apparatus? How does the Party functionary react when he notices that telegrams

to Moscow are now signed by the Central Committee whereas they had previously borne Chervenkov's signature? In short, these seemingly negligible symptoms of the new diffusion of power are now cropping up in the whole area almost daily; while they affect attitudes among the general membership they also cannot fail to influence the interrelationships of the leaders themselves.

Basic to this analysis of the interrelationship between formal changes in authority and *de facto* changes in power relations, is the factor of prestige. Reduction in the leaders' personal stature is the result not only of deflation of the personality cult and the corresponding advocacy of the merits of collective leadership, but also comes as a consequence of the practical day-to-day demonstration of the principle in action. No matter what the internal power realities within the highest Party organs really are—and it is of course probable that single individuals or closely-knit cliques are still dominant—the prestige of former demigods such as Rakosi, Chervenkov, Bierut and Gheorghiu-Dej has been lowered in the eyes of the people. They no longer possess the lethal glamor, the magnetism of uniqueness they once enjoyed. For popular consumption—and indeed for Party consumption as well—they are now presented as fallible human beings, still powerful, but at the same time members of a round table. At a time when the middle and lower Party organs and the masses they control are called upon to participate ever more actively in carrying out the new program, these leaders have abdicated from their former position of exclusive pre-eminence. This loosening in the totalitarian structure, however temporary or superficial it may prove to be, has given rise to new problems and to new dangers, and indications so far are that the Communists have found no adequate solution.

Initiative and Discipline

In Hungary, where the New Course was introduced with the greatest vigor and where collective leadership at the top was established as far back as last summer, the question of administrative discipline has been most thoroughly debated. It is this question of *discipline* and *initiative* (or put otherwise, *responsibility* and *flexibility*) that is the heart of the matter in implementing the New Course. The Communists themselves are not quite sure of how to deal with the problem, but groping and fumbling, the solution they have posed as it appears to be developing involves a structural loosening within the Party and managerial apparatuses. Many articles have been written on the subject, one of the most explicit of which was a *Szabad Nep* editorial of February 4, 1954:

"There are people who believe that centralism and discipline prevailing in the Party are in contradiction to collective leadership. The Party is indeed governed by rigorous centralism and iron discipline. That, however, must not be mistaken for the centralism and discipline of administrative, economic, and especially military organizations. In these organizations, the leaders are appointed from above and the form of leadership is based on individual responsibility, while discipline is governed in the main by the established hierarchy of superiors and subordinates."

* Page 366.

"These leaders are not required to give an accounting of their activities to those whom they lead. On the other hand, the Party constitutes the voluntary alliance of the best workers. The Party organizations themselves elect their leaders, and even the Central Executive members are elected by the delegates of the lower bodies."

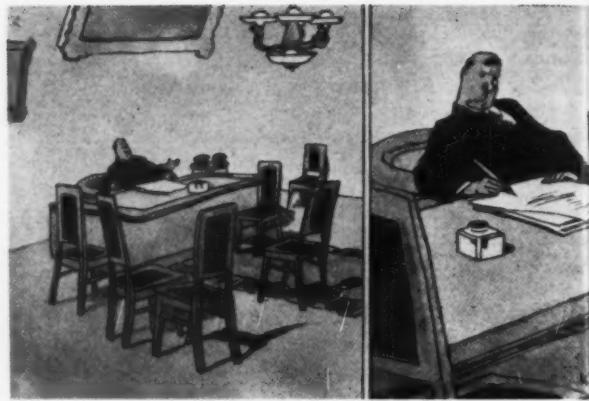
The fundamental problems are apparent here: how far can initiative be permitted? how will responsibilities be assigned? what leniencies and punishments may be allowed? in short, what substance will actually fill out the rather amorphous outlines of "collective leadership"? Some relaxation of control is necessary, but the "liberalization" must be contained and directed by the Party interests, and easily revocable if the sudden need for a change in Party line should arise.

The Varieties of "Collectivity"

Moreover, there is a careful line drawn between different types of "collectivity." Although the Communist center wishes to divert some responsibility and initiative to its middle and outer edges, it wishes to transfer only as much control as is necessary to carry out its policies. It is willing, apparently, to transfer more control than before to the outer edges of the Party and managerial bureaucracy, but that does not mean relinquishing control to the people. True, the center wants more suggestions, initiative and co-operation from the people, but it is its *Communist New Course* it wants implemented and fulfilled, *not the people's New Course*. This is most clearly true in the economy where it is necessary for the center to maintain production control. A good example was contained in a *Szabad Nep* article of September 2, 1953:

"In our basic organizations, the principle of collective leadership must be adopted. However, it must be emphasized only to the Party organizations; in government and economic agencies there is one responsible boss. The revival of the ill-famed plant triangle [consisting of plant manager, president of the trade union committee and Party secretary] is out of the question."

The willingness to extend certain privileges to the Party faithful makes good sense from the Communist point of view. After all, these are their shock troops, on whose leadership flexibility and initiative the success of the new policies depends. The center does not want the production mechanism to get so far beyond its command that it cannot control what and how things are produced. Nevertheless, to achieve new productivity rises and increased production, it must permit more managerial initiatives and responsibilities and also must keep the Party from impeding economic advancement. Therefore, in spite of the present urgency for efficiency, speedy implementation and more rational pragmatic planning, the Party cadres at the plant, factory and production levels will not be allowed to finally determine policies. As the March 14, 1954 *Szabad Nep* put it: "Party organs at offices and institutions cannot control the leader or leaders of the offices and institutions . . . the leaders of offices . . . are controlled by pertinent higher Party organs." In other words, functional de-



Title: With regard to the demand for collective discussion.

Caption 1: [They] Discussed.

Caption 2: [They] Decided.

Dikobraz (Prague), December 13, 1953

mocracy—the give and take of initiative and responsibility at all levels—is not the Communist aim in the New Course. The Communist aim is best summed up in the previously quoted Slepov statement: "It is necessary to know how to combine the collective principle with personal responsibility in carrying matters through . . . just as collectivity is essential in discussing basic problems, so individual responsibility is essential . . . to prevent evasion of responsibility for implementing decisions." The Communist center then wants its cake and wants to eat it too; it wants initiative but not too much initiative, links with the masses, but not democratic control by or responsibility to the masses. How then is the link from below to be broadened in the absence of genuine organs of popular expression?

The method chosen appears to consist in a carefully-contrived expansion of the criticism and self-criticism principle, and in a more liberal interpretation of the concept of intra-Party "debates." The words used to describe these new conditions are, however, very similar to the sham propaganda of the Stalinist era. The one element that is really new is that at present Party Comrades do not have to fear the use of terror quite as much as in the past.*

The crux of the change from the Stalinist method of administration "from above" to the present endeavor to realign the system with "initiative from below," was neatly summed up by a speaker over Radio Prague who, on January 21, 1954, made the following comment: "Our great

* It is true of course that only lately a whole series of trials have taken place throughout the area (involving such old cases as Gabor Peter in Hungary, Lucretiu Patrascu in Romania and Marie Svernova in Czechoslovakia). It may be that these victims of a more brutal past were brought back to the political limelight, hauled into court and sentenced, mainly as a reminder to dissidents that their existence will not be tolerated. But in the sense that the trials conformed to the alleged newly-found reverence for "legality" (by expediting cases that had arbitrarily been ignored for so long), they may also have been intended as a reassurance to the Party apparatus that henceforth the "rule of law" would prevail. Perhaps the trials were meant to dramatize both trends—that while not reversing present relaxations, they were supposed to define the limits of this liberalization.

error . . . is that governmental decrees do not sink in. Discussions are artificial. We wait until the government takes measures. How can the government concern itself with the difficulty of every factory, cooperative or local national committee? What are foremen for?" The speaker might also have raised the question "What are Party organizations on the middle and lower echelons for?" And, in fact, this topic was touched upon many times, not only in Czechoslovakia but in the other captive countries too.

"Intra-Party Democracy"

An editorial in *Rude Pravo* (Prague) of April 15 stresses that "The principle of intra-Party democracy must be faithfully adhered to, so that all questions can be considered in a spirit of irreconcilable criticism towards all deficiencies, so that criticism and self-criticism can be cultivated in full measure." On February 20, the same paper had been even more specific in its reference to the relation between the solution of economic problems and the smooth functioning of Party organizations: "Committees of primary organizations have been frequently criticized . . . for failure to arrange discussions of important Party problems . . . it is timely to remind them of their important tasks; this is particularly important with respect to Party branches in vital industries. . . ."

"The principle of collective leadership," commented Radio Odessa on February 10, 1954, "contributes to the development of self-criticism and criticism from below and to the inclusion of the widest Party masses in the discussion and preparation of decisions." What Radio Odessa failed to mention was that genuine "criticism from below" could only come in the absence of fear. Much effort has therefore been devoted to convincing the people, particularly Party members, that they now have the right to express themselves "freely"—within bounds, of course. One aspect of this campaign is the aforementioned stress on the observance of "legality." Thus, on March 18, 1954, Radio Warsaw broadcast a speech by Politburo member Alexander Zawadzki, in which he said: "It would seem that adherence to . . . legality at every step is an elementary obligation of all citizens . . . however, the attitude of numerous Party members on this matter leaves a good deal to be desired. This involves individual comrades in the Party apparatus, the national councils, and the security organs, as well as judges and prosecutors. They do not practice criticism and self-criticism."

What makes these references to criticism appear more substantial is not only the background of a loosening in political tensions, but also the specific way in which these instructions are worded. A *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw) editorial of March 23, 1954, for example, comments that "the strength and maturity of the Party can be measured by the sharpness, boldness, and range of criticism and the sincerity and depth of self-criticism." On February 11, 1954, Radio Sofia broadcast the text of an editorial from *Rabotnicheskoye Delo* entitled "For Incessant and Brave Criticism and Self-Criticism," which said in part: "Do not be afraid to criticize. Do not hesitate to criticize because you cannot express yourselves precisely and with research, as long as you talk

honestly and conscientiously, as long as you want to help. *Nobody will be hurt because of such criticism.*" In Romania too, *Scinteia* (Bucharest) reminded its leaders on October 29, 1953, that "each Party member must be able to express his opinion openly," and as early as July 28, 1953, the same paper had proclaimed that "Every leader must realize that there can be no 'boyars' within the Party insured against, and sheltered from, criticism."

The Little Kings

In spite of these injunctions from above, petty despotism still survives in the middle and low echelons. Of the various reasons for this state of affairs, the most compelling is that many of the orders from the top cannot be enforced democratically in an authoritarian Party constituting the mainstay of a totalitarian regime. The resultant confusion can best be seen in the approach taken by the elite on the present role of Party secretaries in its attempt to get both initiative from below and leadership from above. For instance, on August 8, 1953, *Szabad Nep* (Budapest) said that "In adopting resolutions within the Party the principle of collectivity must be applied . . . however, this must not be done at the expense of individual responsibility . . . it would be wrong to assume that collectivity in leadership diminished the responsibility of the secretary. The secretary controls the work of the collective; he is personally responsible for the proper functioning of the collective [body], for the adoption of proper resolutions and their implementation. . . ." Less than a month later, on September 4, the same paper complained that the Party secretary "usually does the work of the whole leadership," and pointed out that it was wrong for the secretary to make decisions "which should be decided upon by the membership meeting." By February 5, 1954, Radio Budapest flatly contradicted the August statement. Far from encouraging Party secretaries to see to it that the "proper" resolutions be adopted, the radio deplored the fact that "in many organizations the leaders are still reluctant to take a more active share in the Party work, leaving it to the secretary to propose resolutions."

It appears that there are two interrelated causes for the change in instructions on the work of Party secretaries. On the one hand, it seems that the secretaries are actively resisting the new policies; they have a vested interest in the preservation of Party rigidity and they are not prepared to cooperate in the diminution of their own power. On the other hand, Party members appear to be incapable of assuming or unwilling to accept the type of role now required of them. The majority, as has been pointed out, have probably yearned for a greater freedom of expression for a long time. But they have not been trained for the kind of political acrobatics that forces them to give proof of initiative, intelligence and a pragmatic understanding of shifting socio-economic problems while still preserving "iron discipline" and maintaining their hold over the people. While their leaders at the top are often confused and issue contradictory orders, many of these Party functionaries have been paralyzed into inactivity.

The Party Opposition

The first kind of difficulty—dealing with the opposition by Party men intent on retaining their prerogatives—was frankly discussed by Premier Nagy in a speech he made on July 14, 1953:

"It should be realized that there will be some people unable or reluctant to do away with the anti-democratic spirit and methods of arbitrary conduct and abuses of administrative authority, who will be reluctant to give up the use of administrative means, trying to impede in one way or another the speedy and successful implementation of the measures designed to benefit the masses of the people. The government will be on guard, ready to stop with the power and authority of the State machinery any effort or mischievous attempt of this kind quickly and energetically."

An editorial of January 9, 1954 in *Szabad Nep* shows that this evil is still plaguing the Party, months after the fight against it had been launched. The paper refers to "law-trampling little kings" who "cause material damage." If it were only a matter of removing a few obdurate individuals, the problem would be simple enough, particularly in a Party which, like an army, can dispose of its subordinate members almost at will. But even so disciplined a Party as the Communist one cannot afford to disregard altogether efficiency and continuity. Furthermore, the top leaders realize that the petty despotism of the secretaries is intimately associated with what they call the "bureaucratic attitude"—paralysis—among members. A *Szabad Nep* editorial of January 30, 1954, dealing with "Membership Meetings for Submitting Reports and for Electing Executives" shows how difficult it is for the Party to define its present "personnel policies":

"It cannot be stressed often enough that they should elect persons who are faithful to the people and to the Party, who fought bravely and with initiative for implementation of the June and October [New Course] resolutions of the Party, who for this reason have the full confidence of the Party membership and non-Party people as well. It cannot be stressed often enough that old leaderships should not altogether be replaced but that at the same time new forces should be admitted to the leadership."

The check on the personal dictatorship of strategically-placed Party functionaries is area-wide, so much so in fact that this strutting individual has become a distinct prototype in all Satellite papers. On January 18 of this year, for instance, *Rude Pravo* (Prague) described the case of a certain Jaromir Pozivil, Chief District Secretary of the Party—that is, Chief Secretary of a District Committee. The author of the article, a well-known commentator by the name of Oborsky, speaks of this person as being so diligent and self-sacrificing that he never goes to the movies or the theater, reads neither books nor even short stories, all because he is too busy attending every Party affair. This over-enthusiasm does not meet with the approval of members of the district committee bureau, who feel that they are not allowed to "grow" and work independently. With busybody Pozivil making all the proposals, all they can do is to nod in assent,

and when there is a debate, only the Secretary speaks for the bureau. Finally, the situation becomes so intolerable that the regional committee has to appeal to the district committee to oust Pozivil for violation of the principle of collective leadership. Oborsky admits that he has invented this character, but then adds that the circumstances as described in the article are true of Party life.

There are many examples of actual removals of secretaries for violation of the "collective principle." *Nowe Drogi* (Warsaw) of November 1953 cites the following case:

"Recently Warsaw's Provincial Committee was compelled to remove from office the first and second secretaries of the district committee at Ciechanow. These comrades, having violated the principle of collective Party leadership, considered themselves superior to the executive organ. . . ."

In Bulgaria, Radio Sofia, quoting from a *Rabotnicheskoe Deloartiele*, stressed (on February 12) that the Bulgarian Communist Party "constantly" cares for "embedding" collective leadership in its activities. Mentioning some infringements of the principle, the article appealed to county committees to be "irreconcilable and merciless" toward all such transgressions. In Romania, *Scinteia* of July 28, 1953 held up to ridicule the fact that "Comrade G. Pesleaga, First Secretary of the Vartoapele district Party committee of the Bucharest region, went to the extreme of qualifying as a 'plot' against him that members of the bureau had dared to criticize him."

Bewilderment and Lethargy

The second type of difficulty—that of membership bewilderment and lethargy—cannot be coped with simply by removing persons who refuse to fall into line with the new policies. Remedies in fact cannot be applied until the leadership formulates a clearer plan of action than it has to date—if such formulation is at all possible. The absurdities and ambiguities contained in decrees bearing on the New Course policies cannot be untangled by the middle and basic organizations. Yet it is they who now must bear the brunt of the criticism. The impossible task that is now theirs to carry out entails, among other things, the "election" of the right kind of people to Party organs without the use of intimidation, the simultaneous encouragement of both the private and the collective sectors of the economy, the supervision of both an increase in total production and individual worker productivity without the aid of many of the means of coercion available in the past, and an intensification in "leading the masses" while, at the same time, allowing the masses a greater say in many local issues.

In general, the top Party echelon refuses to admit publicly that the New Course lacks a firm theoretical base,* though Rakosi did say on October 31, 1953, that "It is in the ideological and theoretical work that the progress of our Party must be regarded as least rapid." The leaders

* It is perhaps this lack of a theoretical base which, with the gradual diminution of the Stalin myth, accounts for the continued references to Lenin and the NEP as doctrinal and historical tradition.



Title: What should not happen.

Caption: (Man at the desk is chairman of the board. The people swarming in are all supervisors.)

— "How does the collection stand, Comrade Chairman?"
— "If we collected supervisors, it would stand well."

Mlada Fronta (Prague), April 11, 1954

are much more prone to blame the lower cadres, charging them with having failed to understand orders, or of having bungled attempts to translate them into practice. The term most often used in this connection is "bureaucracy." The word is appropriate in some respects, in so far as there is indeed a mountain of bureaucratic procedure weighing down initiative. But, as used by the Communists, it includes such meanings as inactivity, sham performances, idiotic behavior, miscalculations and failure to cope with situations the leaders misjudge in their directives. More concretely, the leadership reproaches the lower organs with holding either too many or too few meetings and not conducting them appropriately; with neglecting ties with the masses and lacking in coordination. All these deficiencies, according to the regimes, would automatically disappear if collective leadership were "correctly" enforced.

Frequency and content of meetings. A criticism often hurled at Party members is that, while they conform outwardly to the principle of collective leadership (and what it entails in self-criticism) they actually only go through the motions of it. *Narodna Mladezh* (Sofia) of December 23, 1953, cites cases of people who accept every criticism leveled at them, start self-accusations, exaggerate their weaknesses more than they have to, and promise to correct their conduct in the future. "Comrade Maria Ivanova . . . made a cruel self-criticism of failures in her department . . . anyone who heard the criticism would certainly have believed that she would turn over a new leaf . . . but nothing of the sort occurred." In some cases, members, no longer being given "explanations" by the all-knowing secretary, apparently do not know what to do. Thus, *Scienteia* on October 14 spoke of the "unhealthy tendency which manifests itself in certain Party, State and economic cadres where everything is expected from the center." As for frequency of meetings, while *Rude Pravo* of February 20, 1954 laments the fact that "some Party members are not interested in meetings," the paper also complains that

they ought to be more frequent, while *Scienteia* of April 21, 1954 scores the attraction to "meeting-itis," the tendency as it explains, "to hold too often too many . . . ordinary and extraordinary meetings, or the crowding of the agenda with too many problems to be discussed."

Lack of ties with the masses and absence of intra-Party coordination. No matter how often or how seldom Party caucuses are held, it is evident that one of the prime aims of collective leadership consists in establishing a closer contact with the masses and improving communication within the Party itself. So far, indications are that these goals have not been reached. On January 17, 1954, Radio Sofia complained, for instance, that "at the municipal conference in Sliven . . . there was no discussion to explain that the primary work of the Party organizations at the enterprises is a powerful weapon for strengthening ties with the masses. . . ." Perhaps the Party people did not know how to handle the situation for, on April 13, the same station had to explain that "*a careful, comradelike attitude must be adopted toward the people, their needs, and complaints.*" That is the kind of attitude Party members have hardly been trained to exercise. How to curb Party zealots who constantly alienate the people by their gruff behavior was also the subject of a recent *Rude Pravo* editorial which stated that "Some workers of the apparatus have fallen into bureaucratism that is almost beyond understanding. . . . It is necessary to talk with the peasant, not order him about. . . ."

The advantage of closer ties with the people has been particularly stressed in Czechoslovakia lately in conjunction with preparations for the national committee elections. In a *Rude Pravo* editorial of February 24 of this year entitled "The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Party which inspires us and leads us to Victory," and which stresses that the life of the Party does not depend upon "outstanding individuals," it is foreseen that "The national committee elections . . . will fortify the unity of the Party and workers."

This optimistic outlook may turn out to have been misplaced, not only because Party men are incapable of changing their authoritarian ways overnight, but also because the people have ample reason to mistrust Party promises and will therefore resist the offer of cooperation which, for the moment, might be sincere, if calculated. Thus, though the Communists in Czechoslovakia may be ready to allow the people to elect a restricted percentage of "non-Party" persons to the committees, there is evidence that the population is unwilling to enter into such a bargain, preferring to look upon the elections as Party-rigged (which they are). But even if an economic improvement should occur in due time, if political relaxation were to be prolonged and extended, and if the people's antagonism should thaw somewhat, the Communists would still be unable to profit from the change in popular mood as long as their own apparatus does not function properly. Many symptoms constantly recurring in the Satellite press show that the attempt at introducing collective leadership has done much to disrupt intra-Party harmony.

Typical of such recriminations is an article which ap-

peared in *Sztandar Ludu* (Lublin) No. 9 of January 11, 1954. It seems that the District Committee and the District Party Council at Chelm are not working together, and show "great indifference to their duties." The article claims that the Committee is working without a plan, that there has been no collaboration between the District Executive of the Party and the District Party Council, and that the instructions of the Provincial Committee have not been carried out. The complaint is also made that meetings have not been held as often as they should have been and that members of the District Party Council have shown "no initiative." In a similar spirit, *Scinteia* (Bucharest) of April 21 urges that it is necessary to "liquidate" serious shortcomings affecting "decisive links in the Party."

The Tight Rope

A term that recurs very often in these criticisms from above is the word "initiative." The leadership obviously wants the lower echelons to undertake a number of duties that can no longer be determined by means of desk strategy and the continuous issuing of blueprints for action. In many instances, as illustrated in the aforementioned examples, the response is negative. Party members have so far shown themselves incapable in the main of assuming in type of personal, spontaneous initiative taken for granted in the Western world. On occasions, however, initiative has been shown—with disastrous effects.

It is important to recognize that Party functionaries are sharply restricted in their freedom to respond adequately to the problems facing them. They must undertake no action that would weaken Party prestige, Party control and Party plans. The allegiance must be to the Party and not to the people, their pragmatism must be subordinated to the irrational dogma of Party infallibility. In working with the people, and even for them, their sympathy for the masses can never be spontaneously translated into action. A case in point is the precarious situation that has lately arisen in Hungary with respect to the depletion of factory wage funds. An article in *Szabad Nep* of February 25 stated that:

"Despite the fact that the government has granted several wage increases, the situation has become untenable. . . . Since the announcement of the government program, wage discipline has become slack. This is evident . . . because several factories, even whole industries, exceed the wage fund allotted to them month after month. . . ."

"Factory managers, giving way to unjustified worker demands, relax one norm standard after the other. . . ."

"The basic reason [for the present impasse] is that some Party and trade union functionaries give in to unjustified demands out of convenience or indolence. . . ."

That was the result of initiative in the economic field! So far, there has been no official avowal of similar violations in the political domain. It can hardly be doubted, though, that once the fear of drastic reprisals wears off (as it will have to if the New Course is to succeed), trouble from that quarter can also be expected. An illustration of that snowballing process has recently come to light in the Djilas case in Yugoslavia.



Caption: "Bureaucracy hinders the tempo of our country's development."

Title: Ballast (The bureaucrat carries with him a pile of papers marked: "To be attended to.")

Szpilki (Warsaw), April 26

Though the break with the Cominform occurred in 1948, Yugoslavia embarked on its New Course only in 1951-1952. As happened recently in the Satellites, both collectivization and heavy industrialization were slowed down. At the same time, a revamping of the constitutional set-up of the State also took place with the object of "decentralizing power" and introducing "Socialist democracy" in the administrative and economic sectors. The effect of the changes was that the top levels of command "withdrew" into the background. The collective participation of the masses on the upper level was promoted by the People's Assemblies, and on the lower levels new organs called the Workers and Producers Councils were formed, the former representing the individual production unit, the latter the combined production units of a district. A new factor, the consumer, was thereby taken into consideration. Still, as in the Satellites today, key Party functionaries kept key administrative posts. Though the parallel can easily be exaggerated, it is noteworthy that one of the actions Tito took at that time consisted in liquidating the so-called local bureaus, which had been dictatorially ruled by the District Party Secretaries.

The Yugoslav dictator went somewhat further than the Soviet Satellites in allowing influences from the "bottom" to emerge to the surface. He did not, however, find it necessary to stress collective leadership at the top to the extent that the captive countries have. He preferred to establish a *de facto* "sharing of power" with his close associates of the Secretariat, while preserving for himself the glamor of a national hero which, because of his war record, he partly was. That is, his "reforms" did not impair his prestige; on the contrary, by advertising them as anti-Stalinist, he could tap national fervor. And yet, the Djilas eruption did occur. And it occurred not in spite of the relaxation of political and economic controls but *because* of it.

It is significant that no such intra-Party strife took place when Tito, as an absolute dictator with a monolithic machine, first opposed Stalin in a life-and-death struggle, when famine threatened to disrupt the whole economy, and when the West had barely started to back him in his fight. Djilas rebelled against despotism, probably not so much because he was opposed to it in principle (after all, he himself was one of its architects) but because he seemed to recognize that despotism in a modern State has to be near-

absolute to survive, and knew that Tito could ill afford to silence him with a show trial and execution. Djilas, in other words, was giving voice to the demands of the managerial aristocracy. Having sensed that new forces had been liberated and that sooner or later they would have to come to the fore, he seems to have tried to force the issue by putting himself at the head of a "reformist" movement.

It is still too early to tell whether "Djilases" are now infiltrating the top Satellite hierarchy, but it seems inevitable that the New Course will breed the "Djilas spirit" in the Party ranks. The New Course, in fact, was designed to check and channel that spirit. It is unlikely, however, that it will do so. Sooner or later, *pro forma* discussions, if allowed to grow, will encroach upon forbidden territory: the Party's wisdom will be questioned, its role will be revaluated, and doubts will crop up. The Communist leaders cannot allow this to happen, nor on the other hand, can they afford at this stage to scrap the New Course program. In the next few years, therefore, the Red Rulers will have to walk precariously, trying to maintain their balance on a tightrope that will progressively lose its tautness as time goes by.

Housing Shortage Separates Newlyweds

The difficulties faced by young married couples in finding a place to live is raising the divorce rate in Hungary, declared *Uj Marcius* (Budapest), December 1953. Though many Hungarian families are forced to live in one-room apartments, the housing shortage is so acute that newlyweds often cannot get even one of these. Despite a government resolution stipulating that 20 percent of couples getting married should be allotted new apartments, a survey of Budapest covering the period March 1-December 24, 1953, showed that an average of only 11 percent of newly married couples received them.

The hardship this is causing, in addition to the blighting effect it has on romance, was illustrated by the case of a young electric worker cited in *Szabad Ifjusag* (Budapest), January 6, 1954: Although he has submitted 18 petitions to the housing bureau of the Budapest City Council, he is still living, with his wife and baby, now six months old, in a room 5.4 feet by 4.3 feet.

"Operation Veto"



ALTHOUGH Eastern Europe is divided from the Free World by an iron curtain of barbed wire and land mines, the winds still blow free from west to east, a natural phenomenon the Communists have not been able to subvert. On these winds, at the end of April, the Crusade for Freedom began sending thousands of balloons into Czechoslovakia. While leaflets in both Czech and Slovak showered from the balloons, Radio Free Europe transmitters in Munich beamed explanatory broadcasts to the people of Czechoslovakia. It was the beginning of "Operation Veto," the first sustained effort to reach an Iron Curtain country by both printed and spoken word on a closely coordinated, saturation basis, and differing from all similar previous actions in being a long-term campaign in which the message, rather than the ingenuity of the means of communication, was paramount.

What was being vetoed? the farcical government parade for May Day, traditionally a labor day and now the captive celebration of an anti-labor State; the manipulated national committee elections; the whole of the Communist tyranny and terror. But the campaign did not only "veto." It had also a positive program: "The Ten Demands of the People's Opposition." These Ten Demands were for things which seem simple and obvious in the free world, and that once were simple and obvious in free Czechoslovakia: free trade unions, higher wages, freedom to change jobs, the right of farmers to leave collective farms, the lessening or abolition of forced crop delivery quotas, the right to leisure time.

The first message sent in by balloon consisted of a series of posters, small enough to be concealed in the palm of the hand, dealing with the theme of the Ten Demands (See p. 36). They were followed by an eight-page leaflet with the actual text of the Ten Demands. A few days before the elections to the national committees on May 15, the "Ballot

of the People's Opposition," printed in twenty million copies, started to reach the country. This "ballot," (opposite) listing the Ten Demands as the "people's candidates," stressed the fact that the ballot was not meant to contest the regime's rigged elections but to establish the positive program of the people's opposition: "This ballot of the Czechoslovak People's Opposition does not belong in the government ballot boxes. It belongs in the hands of the citizens, who will use it—each according to his own possibilities—as a demonstration of the people's solidarity and as a first part of a step-by-step program against the regime. Securing these first Ten Demands will constitute a historic milestone on the road toward a free Czechoslovakia in a free and united Europe."

How is it known what the people who oppose Communism inside Czechoslovakia want? The opposition platform, spelled out in detail on the "ballot," is based on information from inside the country, developed from refugee reports and analysis of the Communists' own press and radio. This platform, thus based on specific causes of dissatisfaction inside the country and aimed at attainable goals,



Women helpers stuffing leaflets into balloons. Number "10" printed on leaflets symbolizes the Czechoslovak People's Opposition.

The Ten Demands of the People's Opposition

1. Trade Unions for Trade Unionists—Trade union functionaries are responsible only to those who elected them. They must not be dictated to or recalled by the Central Trade Union Council. Trade Union functionaries must bargain collectively on behalf of the workers; press for better wages, conditions, lower norms, and safety measures. They must prevent payroll deductions. When work slowdowns are the only means of achieving just demands, the State as employer must not persecute the workers.

2. More Pay, Less Propaganda—The purchasing power of workers' earnings is considerably below the pre-war level. Therefore, before the end of October of the current year, plants and central offices must increase wages and salaries: for employees earning less than 1,060 kcs. by 15 percent; for workers earning more than 1,060 kcs. but less than 1,500 kcs., by 12 percent.

3. Workers Must Not Be Chained to Their Jobs—Workers must have "freedom to quit" without management permission. Workers must not be compelled to accept State-imposed jobs. Youth must be free to select vocations of its own choosing.

4. No State Regimentation of Free Time—Plant management must not prolong work hours. Sunday and holiday work must be voluntary and compensated for by overtime pay. Overtime must be paid for work in excess of 40 hours per week. Vacations must not be curtailed under any pretext.

5. No More Serfdom—The farmer must be free to leave the collectives without persecution and to regain collectivized property rightfully his. The National Committees must ensure equal treatment for private farmers and collectives, equal credits and bulk-buying prices, larger garden plots, and establishment of a farmers' organization.

6. No Quotas, Or Smaller Ones—Delivery quotas are a temporary evil. While they exist, the local National Committees must exert influence on the district National Committees to ensure just apportionment of quotas. Non-fulfillment of quotas reflects mistaken estimates by the State. The local National Committee must see to it that the farmer is not penalized by the errors of Communist planning.

7. Autonomy for the Local National Committees—The councils and employees of local National Committees must represent the interests of the local population, to whom they owe first allegiance. They must regain authority for the community and prevent the schools from becoming recruitment centers for child labor. In Slovakia, the National Committees must support Slovak autonomy, not Communist centralism.

8. Goods for the People, Not for the Soviets—The regime must be forced to keep its promises to produce more consumer goods, particularly household wares, textiles, etc. Foremen will cooperate with workers in slowing down all production which does not serve these needs, and on, the other hand, in speeding up the production of consumer goods.

9. Back to Servicing the Customer—To cut through the bureaucratic mess of central planning and inefficient wholesaling, retail store managers should apply directly to factories for needed parts and products. Local National Committees must gradually and unofficially turn over communal enterprises to private cooperatives of individual holders. This applies particularly to restaurants, bakeries, small craft enterprises, and personal and repair services.

10. Housing for Families, Not for the State—National Committees must press for larger housing budgets and see that housing sites are chosen according to popular need instead of State planning. Housing must be allocated justly, not on a political basis.



seeks to organize and articulate those pressures which in the past have proven effective against the Communists and induced them to temper the oppression of their Satellite regimes.

The Communists have their newspapers, radio and posters, and the Crusade for Freedom has undertaken to provide the Czechoslovak opposition with its own propaganda means of expressing its demands. The long-range goal is liberation; the immediate, concessions.

This concept of a specific action program appears to have frightened and confounded the regime. The Czechoslovak press preserved an official silence until May 5, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered a note to the United States Embassy in Prague, protesting the "violation of airspace," "interference in Czechoslovak internal affairs," and "nonsensical slander." Nevertheless, the regime note admitted that the messages had at least a seemingly liberal character: "The authors of these leaflets do not dare to openly advocate the restoration of capitalism . . . they feign an interest in the rights and social achievements of the Czechoslovak working people."

Thereafter, in swift succession, numerous attacks appeared in the Czechoslovak Communist press and radio, ranging from solemn invocations of international law to rather childlike "humorous" verse:

"Wherever Dulles carries his vaunted freedom,
And that's everywhere he can—
He carries it on the point of a bayonet,
And when that won't do—in little balloons. . . ."

Radio Prague, May 7

Even President Zapotocky acknowledged and denounced the "balloon provocation" in his speech on May 9. Radio and press commentaries actually used the slogans of the campaign ("Ten Demands," "People's Opposition,") in their attacks, a classic form of recognition.

The earliest mention of "Veto" elsewhere in the Soviet



1. Assembly line: the worker's machine is producing the 10 Demands. "Everybody Votes As Best He Can." 2. National Committeeman (NV) at his desk sees the 10 fingers on the wall (the 10 Demands). 3. Police: "SNB [police]; think of your future! Protect the people from the regime, not the regime from the people!" 4. Farmer chases Party bureaucrat with a pitchfork marked 10 Demands. "Everybody Votes As Best He Can."

bloc came on May 6 when Radio Moscow's International Service announced that "American occupation organs" based in West Germany had launched a new "balloon provocation." On May 7 *Pravda* (Moscow) denounced the campaign but, significantly, withheld the exact content of the Ten Demands from readers in the Soviet Union. Instead, *Pravda* confined itself to calling the leaflets "slanderous, and proof of continued American intransigence in the face of USSR efforts to reduce international tension."

Radio Moscow's announcement seemed to be the signal for Satellite propaganda ministries to release an account of "Veto" to their own peoples. Thus, on May 7, *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), the official Party daily in Poland, and *Otechestven Front* (Sofia), Bulgaria's Party newspaper, carried articles on "Veto." But all the heat generated did not affect the straightforward and unequivocal tone of the US State Department's rejection of Czechoslovakia's diplomatic protest. This reply, delivered on May 24 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague, said in part:

". . . As has been previously suggested, the United States holds firmly to the view that there must exist unobstructed communication between peoples if nations

(Continued on page 38)

Radio Free Europe Replies . . .

This Is the Voice of Free Czechoslovakia . . .

Listen: if you discuss a matter with somebody and he keeps on, for a whole hour, just calling you a hyena and a jackal, what will you think? Probably you will think that he has nothing else to say. This is precisely what we are thinking now, after the government has treated us, exiles, for a whole week—in the press, on the radio, and on speakers' platforms—to the supreme accomplishment of its art of abuse. The shock trooper in this battle was Mr. Jan Drda, the writer. It seems he reread, prior to writing his article, Brehm's *Life of the Animals*, the volume "Beasts of the Desert." He called us exiles hyenas (many times), jackals (many times), tigers (twice), he called us wolves and rats, bandits and murderers, robbers and scoundrels. And lest I forget: devils and beelzebubs too.

When I finished reading what he wrote and what was said in the other utterances of Prague's press and radio, I told myself with relief: we have won. At the beginning of May, balloons spilled pamphlets over Czechoslovakia, containing Ten Demands of the People's Opposition. We don't know exactly where the pamphlets landed, or how many were rescued for the opposition; but from the reaction of the regime we know: the government plan lies in ruins. It was the government's intention to celebrate, on the occasion of the elections to the National Committees, a reconciliation of the people with the regime. There will be no reconciliation. . . . The government's enraged reaction tells us what we need to know—the people keep faith with the Ten Demands and not with the government. And since the government does not dare to abuse the people as yet, it abuses us, exiles.

The first demand reads: the functionaries of the trade unions are responsible to those who elected them. The government answers: you hyena. . . . The second demand reads: employees have the right to leave their employment without permission of the plant and to refuse an employment forced upon them by the state. The government counters: you jackal. . . . The third demand reads: the government must not extend the working hours and everybody should be paid for overtime. The government answers: you tiger. . . . Next demand: the National Committee must represent the true interests of the population. Mr. Drda answers: because of this you must never again set foot on Czech soil, you scoundrels. And another demand reads: wages should be increased. To this Mr. Drda answers: you bandits, you would like to strip the last shirt off our children. It would seem that Mr. Drda is insane. He is not. He only speaks for the regime that is in a tight corner and cannot give an answer to certain questions. . . .

The Prague government presented a protest note to the American government, complaining of the balloons that released subversive inflammatory demands. If it be so, and it may well be, why is the demand for a free choice of profession subversive? Why is the concept of the eight-hour day inflammatory? Why is the thought of free trade unions

conspiratorial? Is it because none of these things exist in the country nowadays, and, insofar as the government is concerned, never will? Are these demands subversive only because the government is determined not to meet them? Whose fault is it that such a normal, weatherbeaten, eighty or hundred-years-old program has suddenly become, in Czechoslovakia, subversive and inflammatory? The Prague government need not discommode itself by engaging in protest notes and polemics with the American government. It has a far better means at hand. Let it repay in kind. The Prague government can get, whenever it wants, balloons which it can fill with gas; it can print identical pamphlets and can send them over German, French, and Swiss territory. It can diffuse, whenever it wants, the same subversive and incendiary demands in Western countries, and it can say: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Only—and there's the rub—the Prague government knows very well the thing would not be eye for eye and tooth for tooth. The rage of the Prague government springs precisely from the knowledge that it is unable to retaliate in kind. The Demands of the People's Opposition are subversive and incendiary in Czechoslovakia alone. It is unpleasant, but it is a fact—this time the government of Prague cannot take revenge.

On the whole, the government overestimates our [the exiles'] role in the entire matter, and it does so intentionally. It would love to pass off what is the innermost breath of all people as a sneeze of the exiles. We did not print our own thoughts on the pamphlets. We listened to several thousands of refugees; we assembled information as to what is discussed in the plants and in the fields; we solicited reports on why strikes and riots occur, why workers resort to slowdown tactics, why miners are discontented, why labor drivers get beaten at times. We found one mighty current to be at the bottom of it all. We have condensed the reports as accurately as possible into the Ten Demands of the People's Opposition. We have not added anything of our own. Now we ask: have we reproduced your demands and your thoughts correctly? The government says they are hypocritical demands. Does anyone of you feel that the eight-hour day, the free choice of one's profession, free trade unions, constitute hypocritical demands? The government says we, exiles, interfere in the internal matters of the State. Even if it were so, the government could have no great fear of us who are thousands of miles away. The government's discomfiture springs from its realization that the home population itself decided to interfere in the internal matters of the State. Since the People's Opposition in the homeland cannot print its program—all printing plants and all paper being the property of the government—we have printed it for the Opposition.

Rude Pravo wrote, "The will of the people is strong." If this be so, *Rude Pravo* should be apprehensive about the future. If the will of the people is strong then the Ten Demands of the People's Opposition in Czechoslovakia will soon be realized, since they are the people's own demands.

are to live in peace and freedom with one another. When a government violates this principle by trying to insulate its people from the world of ideas without, it is only natural that efforts will be made, both inside and outside that country, to break through the insulation. . . . The choice of balloons . . . indicates that the Czechoslovak Government continues to deprive the Czechoslovak people of the possibilities of free contact with other peoples, the free exchange of ideas and the free reception of uncensored news. . . .

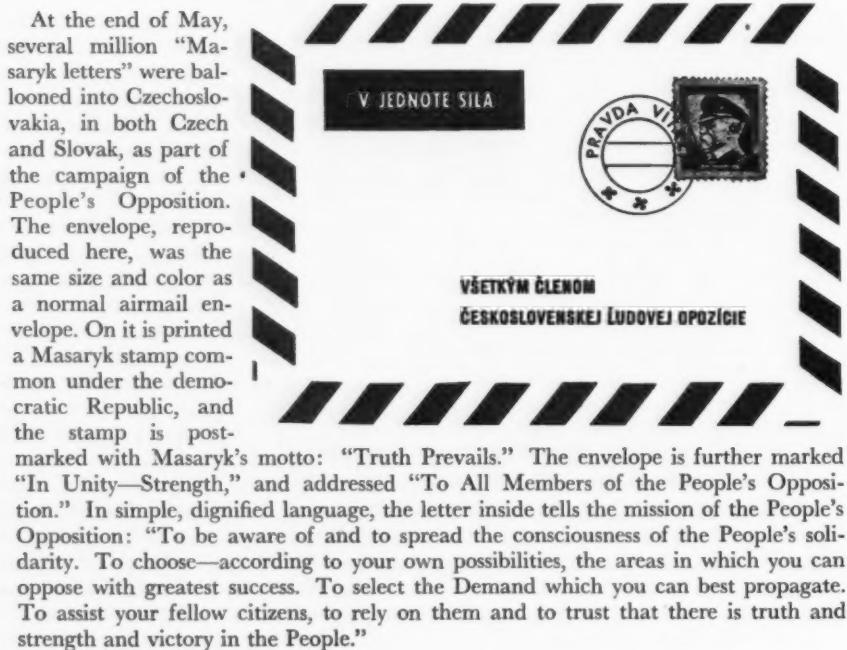
"The leaflets borne to Czechoslovakia express the interest of the American public in seeing the welfare of the people there improved through the attainment of a series of goals. Notwithstanding, the Czechoslovak Government claims that these leaflets were subversive and inciting. It consequently appears that in the eyes of the present regime in Czechoslovakia discussion of concrete steps to better the lot of the common man in that country is subversive in nature. . . .

"If the Czechoslovak Government desires that this form of communication between peoples not be utilized, it lies within its power to remove the need for such media by opening the barrier to free access to the people of Czechoslovakia. . . . The United States Government would have no basis for interfering with attempts by private American organizations to establish communication with the people of Czechoslovakia and to convey to them the interest of the American people in their fate."

Meanwhile, reports from refugees escaping from Czechoslovakia testify to enthusiastic reception of the Ten Demands by the Czechoslovak people. A young Czech who escaped to Vienna several days after the first leaflets were dropped stated that people had begun to write the figure "10" on Communist election posters during the night. Karel Cihak, the Czech pilot who made a spectacular escape to West Germany in a stolen training-plane, said: "These leaflets are read by everybody, regardless of his political opinion. They are circulating among both Communists and non-Communists. The first leaflet I saw was given me by a Communist and while I was reading it, a Communist was reading it over my shoulder." One refugee who recently escaped from Brno declared: "This is the first resolution . . . on this basis one can build and fight against the Communist government for our rights. By pressing the Ten Demands we could force the government to change to a more democratic platform."

And so the issues and the contending parties are clearly counterpoised: free elections against rigged elections, decent living standards and working conditions against deprivation and exploitation, liberty against tyranny. The regime has spoken; now the people speak. Today concessions; tomorrow freedom.

The "Masaryk Letter"

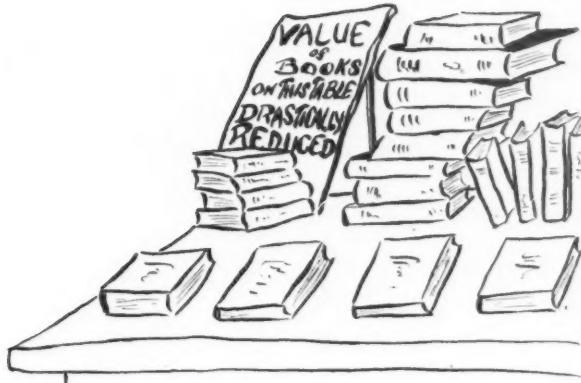


At the end of May, several million "Masaryk letters" were ballooned into Czechoslovakia, in both Czech and Slovak, as part of the campaign of the People's Opposition. The envelope, reproduced here, was the same size and color as a normal airmail envelope. On it is printed a Masaryk stamp common under the democratic Republic, and the stamp is postmarked with Masaryk's motto: "Truth Prevails." The envelope is further marked "In Unity—Strength," and addressed "To All Members of the People's Opposition." In simple, dignified language, the letter inside tells the mission of the People's Opposition: "To be aware of and to spread the consciousness of the People's solidarity. To choose—according to your own possibilities, the areas in which you can oppose with greatest success. To select the Demand which you can best propagate. To assist your fellow citizens, to rely on them and to trust that there is truth and strength and victory in the People."

The Partisan Reviewer

"The partisanship of Soviet literature not only does not limit real freedom of art; on the contrary only it really guarantees true freedom for the artist. Only that artist is free in his creation who is versed in the laws of the historical development of society and who with all his heart is devoted to his people, to the Communist Party and to the socialist society."

Bolshevik, May 15, 1948



IN THEIR attempt to prove that Communism is the only system which can provide conditions suitable for artistic activity—or for that matter any form of human endeavor—the Soviets have gradually developed a technique for combating the influence of Western literature. Their purpose is to convince captive writers and readers that the West has nothing to offer in the way of art or "positive" philosophy, and that Western writing is significant only in so far as it reflects a corrupt world dying on its feet. The whole campaign to deny the value of Western culture is based on the assumption that the Communists automatically build themselves up by tearing the West down—an attitude which, in itself, is hardly conducive to the development of flourishing art. To make facts fit their theory, the Communists use a variety of methods, including willful distortion of truth, evasion and suppression of information.

In Poland, the imposition of Communist aesthetics on literary life was a gradual, if inevitable, process. Immediately following the war, there was a period of relative liberalism, when Western ideas and literature were still welcomed by the majority of writers and critics. By 1948, however, tighter control over the arts was ordered: the Zhdanov line was rigorously applied in literary criticism, and a campaign against the infiltration of Western ideology was initiated. The extent of the damage inflicted on Polish art by Communist dogma and propaganda cannot be fully estimated as yet, nor is the final score foreseeable. It is to be assumed that while the anti-West campaign has not been without considerable success, many writers and critics, acquainted with past tradition, feel that beyond the prescribed political borders of Communist vision there exists a free and spontaneous current of true creativity.

Early Period

Between the years 1945-1948, Polish critics took an intense interest, shared by most European intellectuals, in all types of new artistic forms and fresh ideas. At that time, only a few critics had mastered "Marxist aesthetics," and the majority still sought intellectual nourishment from the West. This interest was reflected in the large number of critical and informative articles on Western literature which appeared in Polish periodicals in the years directly after the war. In a recent review on a book called *Journey to the West* (published in 1953) critic Lech Budrecki describes these earlier years and provides insight into Communist efforts to sever Polish contacts with the West. From Budrecki's article, it appears that over the past six years Polish periodicals which printed intelligent articles on Western literary activities have been suppressed and that a "conspiracy of silence" now prevails. Enthusiasm for the various stylistic innovations and ideas advanced in Western fiction is now forbidden, and only appreciation of "Socialist realism" is permitted. The effect of this policy has been to deprive the present-day Polish reader of the opportunity to extend his horizons and gain insight into the variety of human experience. The "conspiracy of silence," however, has not succeeded in destroying the people's interest in Western literature. Budrecki reveals that Poles still discuss Western art and "unfortunately" perpetuate the "incorrect evaluations" of the earlier criticism. He suggests therefore that Western literature be combated more "positively," but carefully points out that any undue emphasis on the West presents its dangers, thus displaying the fear that the hot-house Marxist culture is all too vulnerable to Western

"competition." Writing in the January 24, 1954 issue of *Zycie Literackie* (Cracow), he says:

"If one wanted to make a list of our critical works containing an analysis and criticism of bourgeois artistic tendencies during the imperialist epoch, the task would not be easy. . . . This would not be due to lack of information on the subject. . . . *Tygodnik Powszechny* [a Catholic weekly] diligently used to publish reviews on almost every new novel of Graham Greene, Bruce Marshall, Simone de Beauvoir and Evelyn Waugh. Several years ago *Odrodzenie* [no longer published] printed a series of articles on Franz Kafka and Ernest Hemingway; *Kuznica* [no longer published either] dedicated an entire issue to 'American prose' dealing exclusively with the so-called Lost Generation: Steinbeck, Caldwell, [Henry?] Miller and Wright [sic]. One could not complain about the shortage of information on Western events: the interpretation of them, however, was not always correct. As a rule, critical articles on Western literature were characterized by admiration for the 'brutality' of Caldwell, the 'rationality' of Camus, the lyrical invocations of Saint Exupery or for the 'composition gimmicks' of William Faulkner. Such an attitude towards Western literature is now perfectly understandable. Most of these 'excursions to the West' took place during 1945-48, that period which preceded final formation of our own artistic and ideological values. After 1948, our interest in Western literature fades away; the silence is only infrequently interrupted by an occasional article or note. Thus, anyone interested in the problem of cultural degeneration of the bourgeoisie is condemned to reading the sketches and essays written several years ago which, more often than not, offer incorrect interpretation of facts and problems. As a result, an interested reader is ready to believe in the allegedly disquieting "economy of words" of Camus, or the allegedly inspiring innovations of Norman Mailer, is ready to submit to hints of adoration for John Dos Passos' *USA* or for the elaborate poems of W. H. Auden.

"Although too keen an interest in Western literature would be very unwelcome . . . the conspiracy of silence which surrounds the problems of contemporary bourgeois art is rather disquieting. It contributes towards preserving the unfortunately surviving myth of the 'perfection of the prose' of Victor Serge, the essays of George Orwell, the lyrics of Stephen Spender and MacNeice, or the pictures of Bracque and Dali.

"That is why Kaluzynski's *Journey to the West* is a valuable addition to contemporary Polish criticism. The Polish reader has finally been given a book which interrupted the conspiracy of closed mouths, [a conspiracy] which had unfortunately supported the whispers of various cafe talkers."

"Intellectual Conquest of the World"

During these formative years, the few Polish critics who were equipped with a Marxist aesthetics launched vigorous attacks against Western writers for creating art which was subjective, individualistic, psychological, pessimistic, tragic, formalistic and amoral. These attacks, which amounted to theoretical deliberations on art, clearly foretold future policy. They indicated that too great an interest in or admiration for Western "innovations" would be unwel-

come in the near future and that if the writer in Communist Poland hoped to find a place for himself in the "new reality" he would have to take his literary models from the East. The aim of the Communist critics, as described by Henryk Markiewicz in the literary monthly *Tworczość* (Warsaw), March 1952, was to replace the Western aesthetics founded on "modern bourgeois humanism" with Marxist aesthetics. As an example of their efforts, Markiewicz wrote:

"A much sharper attack against bourgeois literature of the imperialist period was launched by Jan Kott in a few essays written during the occupation [German]. . . .

In his analysis of the work of Stendhal, the surrealists, Gide and Conrad, he established, so to speak, an ideological equivalent of literary symbols. . . . Kott attacks that point of view which considers poetry 'an overpowering spiritual adventure'. . . . [He also attacks] formalistic experimentation, the anti-social amorality of Gide's concept of man, and finally, the pessimistic tragicism of the lonely heroes of Conrad and Malraux, fighting against a merciless, blind and irrational fate. To these myths of the imperialist epoch, Kott opposes a postulate of literature's return to reality, and a slogan of perceptive, intellectual conquest of the world. . . ."

The task of convincing Polish writers that Western literature was no model on which to base their literary aspiration was by no means easy. It was one thing to say that Conrad's and Malraux's heroes were lonely and doomed, and quite another to prove that these authors wrote no "literature." Further, in the minds of Poles, and indeed of all Europeans, "tragic heroism" was irrevocably connected with the individual, and individualism held an important place in the pattern of Polish thinking.

However, the Soviets did not rely on argumentation to accomplish their ends. By 1948, they had launched the painful "conspiracy of silence," mentioned by Budrecki, and all discussion—not to mention praise—of Western writing became dangerous. Attention was focused on Soviet and other Communist literature, and the dearth of information on new Western books was the chief method used to dry up interest in this field. At present, reviews of contemporary Western writers are published only rarely and are written by a handful of critics who have been given the stamp of Party approval.

The Contemporary Scene

The current Soviet policy on Western literature was enunciated last fall by Ilya Ehrenburg, probably the foremost "authority" on Western writing in the Communist-controlled world. In an article entitled, "On the Work of an Author," translated from the Russian and reprinted in the Satellite press, Ehrenburg set the line to be followed by literary critics throughout the Soviet orbit. Ehrenburg's theme is that modern Western literature is completely impoverished and is produced by spiritual dwarfs, who lack not only positive ideals but have even lost the capacity, displayed by leading writers earlier in the century, to portray effectively the "evils of the capitalist world." As quoted

by *Nowa Kultura* (Warsaw), November 8, Ehrenburg voiced the opinion that the earlier generation of great writers had literally or metaphorically died off, and that all protest had now been silenced:

"One automatically asks the question: how do authors in a bourgeois society write today? It would seem that their task is easy: to show a dying world, now almost on the verge of collapse. But contrary to these expectations, Western literature surprises us with its poverty; this much has been admitted even by loyal critics in France, England and the United States.

". . . Between the First and Second World Wars, great writers of the last century were still writing magnificent books: Romain Rolland, Dreiser, Bernard Shaw, Ham-sun (his infamous end should not make us forget his good early works), Wells, Roger Martin du Gard, Gals-worthy, Hauptmann, Heinrich Mann, Pirandello. In the same period, American writers produced a number of cruel but human novels. The first books of Hemingway, Caldwell, Steinbeck and Faulkner impressed the reader with their sincere and profound despair. Certain critics accused those writers of pessimism. Yes, there were in the United States men who revealed the struggle of progressive circles . . . against racism, exploitation, degradation and violation of human dignity. But American progressive circles were still weak. The writers accused of pessimism merely described what they themselves had seen, opposing with their despair the patented smile of Bab-bit's millions.

"And finally, during the inter-war period, the writers of bourgeois Europe—Mauriac, Doeblin, Jules Romains, Moravia, Joyce, Roth and others—used to reflect in their gifted books the exhaustion and decline of capitalist society. Such books are no longer written in the West: some of these writers have died, others have become silent, and still others have become spiritually dwarfed."

While acknowledging the value of Western literature produced earlier in the century, Ehrenburg is saying, in effect, that the period of "critical realism" has served its purpose: the above-mentioned writers did a good job of depicting the "monstrous diseases of the capitalist world," but the appearance of revolutionary Communism should have shown them and their followers the way to action—not merely passive resistance. It follows that, having disregarded the Communist struggle, the "critical realists" are beyond all hope and can produce nothing valuable. According to Ehrenburg, the writer in the West is immersed in a world of dying ideas; he is tossed by doubts and is the victim of panic, and he has become hypocritical, irrational, apathetic or hysterical:

"During the inter-war period, the bourgeois writer understood that his society was condemned to die, but he still tried to preserve his calm, so indispensable even in grief. His despair was then still under control and could have been converted into artistic forms. At present, however, the Western writer no longer knows what will happen to his heroes, or even to himself. It is difficult to plan a novel when your friend tells you that an atom bomb will drop on you in a year or so, while American soldiers march up one street and workers strike on another. Some writers weep despairingly in newspaper col-



Title: The Evicted

Caption: "The New York house where Mark Twain lived and died was recently condemned."

Szpilki (Warsaw), February 7, 1954

umnns, while others—with any particular enthusiasm—describe rare phenomena, interesting only to psychiatrists or criminology experts."

Attack

The Communist campaign to prove that contemporary Western literature is worthless has not, of course, been restricted to the general charge of impoverishment and atom hysteria. It has ranged from vicious assaults on the personal reputation of Western writers to denunciations of Western culture as a whole. Included are: Western writers are perverse and morally degraded; they indulge in pseudo-philosophical mystification, vulgarized humanism and anti-social attitudes; they are hypocrites who have failed to resist the pressure of forces which they oppose, and have sold themselves politically, materially or morally to the "forces of reaction"; they refuse to realize that their world is on the verge of collapse and therefore produce nothing of importance; or, in lieu of this, they produce nothing valuable just because their world is disintegrating.

With this ammunition, the Communists conduct a two-fold campaign: they not only ridicule the "vulgar and primitive" culture allegedly reflected in American music, dance and movies, but they also attempt to prove that everything produced in the West is decadent and immoral.

Just as American movies are described as dedicated to satisfying the pornographic tastes of the masses, so the "bourgeois artist" supposedly aspires to all that is degenerate and sexually perverse. This attitude is naturally contrasted to the vigor and health of Soviet art. Ehrenburg writes in this respect:

"I recently read a novel by a young but already well-known French writer. The young hero of the novel is a homosexual who marries an old woman so that he can get her money and, after the wedding night, which is described in full detail, he visits his sister in order to taste the sin of incest. It is easy to understand that, after having read a book like this, a reader finds fresh air in reading *The Young Guard* or *The Harvest* [Soviet classics]."

"The Sell-Out"

Another alleged symbol of Western decadence is the bourgeois writer's "hypocritical attitude" towards the proletariat. This charge is launched against authors who, allegedly under the pretext of introducing proletarian themes into literature, serve "the reaction." The source of this specific attack can be traced back to the late twenties and early thirties, when Russia attacked some hope to Western writers who became affiliated with progressive movements or who dealt with the so-called proletarian aspect of literature. Once these writers (Dos Passos, Steinbeck, Priestley, etc.) revealed their antipathy to Communism, the Soviets denounced them as traitors. The accusation of hypocrisy, as it is currently employed, is merely a repetition of earlier denunciations of Hemingway, Steinbeck and others. A characteristic illustration of this criticism appeared in the March 7, 1953 issue of *Nowa Kultura* (Warsaw). Written by an Englishman called George Bidwell (whose articles are translated by his Polish wife, Anna), the review read:

"The London Embassy Theater recently gave a performance of Hugh Hastings' *The Inner Circle*, which begins with an attempt to shock the coat-tailed and decollete spectators; the curtain rises on a scene representing the interior of a workers' room. But the shock is immediately softened; it appears that all the heroes from the working class are thieves, black marketeers and even murderers."

It is significant that Bidwell's articles, although badly written, appear frequently in the Communist press and occupy a prominent place in Polish literary criticism. Evidently, his opinions are supposed to represent the authentic views of an "enlightened" Westerner towards his own culture.

From Bidwell's review, it is clear that the Communist critic is not concerned with the artistic value of Western literature; his task is to attack from the Marxist viewpoint a world and an ideology which he considers alien and dangerous. This attitude may lead him so far as to say, as one critic remarked at the Wroclaw Peace Congress several years ago, that "if a hyena had a fountain pen he could write like Eliot."

When an attack on a Western writer's literary integrity seems inadequate for their purposes, Communist reviewers

attack the man, irrespective of his art. Thus in a criticism of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, Zygmunt Kaluzynski, writing in *Nowa Kultura* (Warsaw), January 31, 1954, accuses:

"The action of the book takes place in Cuba—a country which has always 'thrilled him most' as he himself puts it, 'by its equatorial paradise of strong men.' Hemingway stayed in this Central American [sic] Republic during the war as an agent of the American Political Police. . . . This unknown detail of the writer's *curriculum vitae*, whose secrecy Hemingway himself has guarded most strictly, has recently been made known in the Western press. . . ."

In their campaign to prove that Western writers have sold themselves to the enemy, the Communists profit from the old Slavic proverb, "If you can't get him from one side, get him from the other." Occasionally, instead of blaming the Western writer for succumbing to reaction, the Communists condemn the society in which he lives for provoking this "betrayal" by making it almost impossible for the artist to earn a living or to gain a respected position in society. This argument is aimed to carry great weight with the Communist writer, who is accustomed to a privileged position—to State subsidies, scholarships, good food, lodgings, free railway tickets, and other advantages. The regime propaganda machine convinces Polish writers that under Communism they have been granted a security which is matched nowhere else in the world. Naturally, these benefits depend upon the writer's loyalty to Communism and willingness to close his eyes to freedom—but nevertheless such propaganda has its effects. In describing the Western social writer's position, the Communists adopt the line taken by George Bidwell in *Nowa Kultura* (Warsaw), March 7, 1954:

"Only a few writers . . . have the courage to adopt an attitude which would endanger the success they enjoy—not among the gallery—but among lodge members and armchair clients. It is difficult to earn a living merely by writing plays. Thus playwrights engage in criticism, short story writing, publicity, and cooperate with publishing houses and theater managements. If one of them openly opposes the holy law of private ownership, subservience to the US and cheating the people, editors will refuse to employ him, publishers will begin to doubt his opinions, and the all-powerful libraries will condemn his novels."

"Blind Alley"

The main object of all Communist criticism of Western literature is to show that the situation in the non-Soviet world is hopeless, and that all "bourgeois fiction" reflects the moral and ideological disintegration of capitalism. Using a variety of French, American and British books to make their point, the Communists direct this charge against works produced by Western writers who differ sharply in their political and philosophical outlook.

The consolidation of Communist rule put an end to the earlier period of tolerance in which the Soviets exonerated liberal Western writers for not joining their cause. Today,

Absalom, Absalom . . .

In the May 16, 1954 issue of *Zycie Literackie* (Cracow), the following article appeared on William Faulkner's novel *Absalom, Absalom*. It appears below not only because it is a selection of Communist literary practice but also because, with the exception of a few fillips of Communist propaganda, it is essentially an attempt at a fair review by a perceptive critic.

French literary magazines dedicate a lot of space to William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom*, a novel only recently published in French. Published in the United States in 1938, the book passed without a splash in the novelist's own country, just as all the other books of this least popular of the so-called "Big Five" of American literature (Hemingway, Dos Passos, Steinbeck, Caldwell, Faulkner). *Absalom, Absalom* is being carefully discussed at the present time by critics of all points of view. It is perhaps the only serious public success of Faulkner, now nearing the sixtieth year of his life, and it has taken place not in his own country. *Absalom, Absalom* was published in France after a fifteen year delay. . . .

The publisher's hesitation becomes understandable when we begin to read the novel. It is easy to understand that many readers, troubled by Faulknerian heroes' long and complex internal monologues, lost in the confusion of chronological disorder, and bored by the narratives of persons who with great effort try to reconstruct a picture of events which took place in the distant past, put away the novel half unread, particularly when they have been accustomed to the direct spontaneity of American novels. Faulkner has not made his truth easily accessible and that is why it becomes—when acquired by the reader with so much difficulty—more and more irresistible.

It is moral truth. It is impossible to review the book, so rich and complex, in the limits of this short essay. Let us try, however, to give our readers at least a general impression of the novel. Faulkner describes many terrible events which, when retold in dry precis, might create a macabre impression. His works contain complex tragic elements such as may be found in the violent deaths of Sophocles or Shakespeare. It should also be remembered that Faulkner's creations are filled with an atmosphere of war and that he himself is a writer of cataclysms of which we know little or nothing. The atmosphere of the Civil War, conducted with such ruthlessness and cruelty, almost compares, if we dig into the documents pertaining to it, to our own experiences of 1939-1945.

Faulkner's strength lies first of all in the fact that, in contrast to Hemingway, who describes adventures in far-off lands, or in contrast to the science-fiction writers, who search for themes in modern microbiology, genetics, interplanetary travels or in the messy miracles of Freudian psychology, he stubbornly sticks to his mother country. He tries to go deep into the history of his country, as deeply as the memory of living people permits, to find the causes of internal struggle troubling his countrymen at this time, when they put on the air of happy-go-lucky, which in the outside world has given them a reputation of a nation free of worries, troubles and unclear consciences. . . .

Faulkner is often charged with complicating the history

of the Sutpen family, disarranging chronology and mixing the often incompatible narrations of various persons, thus making the book one of the most difficult of recent years. While reading the novel, however, we become convinced that this complex technique is not a free formalistic virtuosity, but closely connected with the book's meaning.

For, as a matter of fact, *Absalom, Absalom* is in reality a tremendous examination of conscience made by a slow and difficult analysis of events. The complexity of narration is a result of the moral semi-darkness in which all Faulkner's heroes, gradually discovering the truth, live. And this truth is also sought by the author himself as he moves with great difficulty along this complex road. . . . One of the critics has called Faulkner's novel "a never-ending and painful question mark."

The truth finally discovered by Faulkner is simple. It seems disproportionate to the complicated investigation made to discover it. We ought to remember, however, that its value is measured not by its simple aphoristic form, but by the human effort made for the purpose of gaining, establishing and understanding it. Mrs. Beecher Stowe says the same thing Faulkner says: she condemns racial hatred. But what a difference there is between the sentimental *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the great Faulknerian tragedy whose moral argumentation, thanks to its authentic humanity, acquires great power of conviction.

Faulkner's words should have particular significance for Americans. Beneath the appearances of peace, tranquillity, order and indifference, the author uncovers terrible tragedies. He sees famous American families—that pride of America—divided by misunderstanding, hatred and finally crime. "They had lived in a world in which mutual understanding, contact, was impossible, because it was a world of slavery and exploitation. It poisoned their lives so that that they did not know any other way to solve their problems but death."

"They did not know any other way. . . ." We do not agree with the pessimistic conclusion of Faulkner, who evades the possibility of salvation by social development, limiting himself to the bounds of individual conscience. His Protestant Puritanism, his desperation, and his approach, which denote blindness to the whole revolutionary Negro movement, are alien to us. Nevertheless, Faulkner—this American Zeromski—expresses the basic truth from which all social justice begins: "They perished—by suicide, tearing at one another, tearing their brother: the black brother. They had been condemned to death at the moment they rejected their brother." Thus, when we sometimes think about what is best in the American nation, subjected today as before to the pressures of superstition, prejudice and hatred, we should not forget about this struggle within the conscience troubling William Faulkner.

those writers who happen to support some Communist views and yet do not engage in "positive" defense of these views by supporting the Party are treated only with contempt. While the Communists exploit such instances of agreement, they claim that the author himself has either been granted "temporary sanity" or is suffering from "bourgeois paralysis". Recently, the French *Gazette des Lettres* asked certain prominent French authors to improvise on the theme, "A Novel I Shall Never Write." Marcel Ayme submitted a sketch entitled, "The Sheriff's Daughter," which was obviously anti-American in tone. It dealt with America's declaration of war on Russia, the Free French Government's opportunistic cooperation with the US, France's destruction, and the romance between the son of an exiled French Foreign Minister and the daughter of a Texas Sheriff. The sketch ends on a macabre note, with America ordering the castration of all French survivors and the inability of the Minister's son to satisfy his American wife. In a lengthy article on this sketch, Polish critic Kaluzynski, writing in the January 10, 1954 issue of *Nowa Kultura* (Warsaw), wrote:

"The finale of Ayme's unwritten novel is a parody of a popular American literary genre—the so-called 'psycho-analysis based on sex.' This literary genre, which has been ridiculed by French critics, will—Ayme sarcastically prophesies—triumph in the future world now being prepared by American politicians. There is no place for France in this world of the future—the frightened successor of Anatole France seems to be saying. His opinion is interesting to us only in so far as it expresses the anxiety of a bourgeois on whose behalf Messieurs Mok [probably Jules Moch, a Socialist leader] and Choumane [Schuman, the heroes of Ayme's sketch] try to make France dependent on the US. In this sarcastic and grotesque portrayal, Ayme acquaints us with the state of mind of the French bourgeoisie, confronted by the political program of Bidault who calls it, 'the best we can come out with.'"

"Neo-Fascism"

The Communists, of course, are more vitriolic when dealing with conservative writers such as T. S. Eliot, who enjoys one of the most prominent positions on the Soviet "unpopularity list." Eliot has long been regarded by the Communists as the "bard of darkest reaction," "a rhyming trickster," "a barking dog," and so forth. His philosophical and religious stand has aroused the fury of Communist dilettantes, and his contribution to Western literature is vigorously denied by even the more intelligent Communist critics. In a recent attack on Eliot, the monthly, *Tworczość* (Warsaw), November 1953, not only cited his works as an example of Western decadence, but insisted that Eliot himself was the very product of it:

"It is probable that the present literary period will be called barren by future literary historians. . . . Those writers who are unable to cope with reality betray a tendency to withdraw into the only alley in which they may find comfort: they escape into an ideological blind alley. . . . They write about a society which expresses all the typical aspects of decadence. . . . But they not only

present decadence in their works—they are the very product of it."

"This much was said by Arnold Kettle, Professor of English Literature at Leeds University in his Marxist study entitled *An Introduction to the English Novel*. The aptness of this statement is illustrated by two recent works by well-known English writers: T. S. Eliot's *The Confidential Clerk* and J. B. Priestley's *Contemplations in the Desert*. . . .

"All of [Eliot's] heroes are confronted with the necessity of making a choice: where to go from here. . . . Either way, Eliot's advice seems to be: 'let us follow in the footsteps of our fathers because every one of us should resign himself to the fate which has become his burden.' This indeed is a 'typically decadent point of view.'

"It is not difficult to understand why Eliot is so popular among Mayfair theater goers and poetry lovers. Eliot expresses the ruthless egoism of a narrow class for which 'following in the footsteps of our fathers' means simply living in comfort at the expense of others. . . ."

Giving Priestley similar treatment, *Tworczość* expresses the hope that "future generations will erase the blot on literature" made by these two writers:

"And what led Priestley into the desert? In a recent conversation with an American journalist, Priestley stated that he no longer was a Socialist. His Socialism had always been based . . . on false premises. Soon after the war, when he produced at his own expense a progressive play about the United Nations, boycotted by the more well-to-do London public, Priestley came to the conclusion that Socialism was unprofitable. Now he is sailing on the waters of good business, as an exponent of the social milieu in which he has always felt best—namely, the upper middle class. . . . Priestley has exchanged his observer's window, through which he looked at the world, for a well-guarded tower, which can be approached only through a rocky tunnel. There he has withdrawn to carry on his pessimistic, neo-Fascist contemplations."

America

By far one of the most interesting articles illustrating the "decline of the West," appeared in the October 11, 1953 issue of the pro-regime Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*. Writing on Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*, the reviewer, Jan Dobraczynski, deals with the book from the viewpoint of a Catholic, as well as of a Communist supporter—a position which presents its difficulties, despite the fact that Dobraczynski is an able, learned critic who is not a Marxist. In his discussion of Mailer's book, Dobraczynski reproaches the author for his negative philosophy—attacking him on both Communist and religious grounds. It is difficult to discern, however, whether Dobraczynski genuinely regrets what he considers to be Mailer's, and by implication America's, failure to supply the world with positive, Christian values, or whether he speaks as a faithful Communist determined to prove the imminent collapse of the West. In any case, Dobraczynski's review is far more intelligent than the majority of critical essays in Communist Poland and is written on a level which permits reply:

"No other novel has made war appear so odious as Norman Mailer's. . . . In any other novel we discover a certain balance between the monstrosity of war and hatred on the one hand, and the beauty of sacrifice and heroism on the other. Such a balance is missing in Mailer's book. For him, heroism is always a form of ambition or impulse. . . . His [characters] represent a chaotic conglomeration of mutual grudges, contempt, hatred, jealousy and uncontrolled voluptuousness, expressed in almost every gesture, word and sigh. The author does not hesitate to use even the strongest expression or to describe the most brutal and intimate scene. And that is why the book's title can also be explained otherwise: here are the naked people (the author seems to say) before they are dead. . . . His book condemns war but at the same time condemns the society whose representatives it describes. If Croft's patrol is to be a *sui generis* microcosm of America—one must admit that Mailer has shown the whole profundity of his country's fall.

"Mailer's novel is existentialist. But the American version of literary existentialism, differs slightly from the European version. In European existentialism, we come across something which one might call 'Christianity *a rebours*.' Hence the Camus kind of searching for 'saints without God,' hence the Stoicism which so often tries to appear in the shape of non-obligatory Christianity. American existentialism knows no such mystification. It does not even contain the form of denied Christianity. It lacks the morality which has been formed and handed to the world by Christianity. It does not accept even 'the premonitions of Christianity,' as Simone Weil would say, which may be found in Stoicism. It is in itself an Epicureanism of the purest kind. It is a philosophy of a man who, living in a wicked, idiotic and nonsensical world, is himself a wicked, egoistic beast, and who must be just that. There is no way out. There is no solution. Or rather, the solution may be found in the gestures of men like General Cummings, who says: 'We must arouse in our subordinates hatred and then use it against our adversaries. This is the way to win.'

Darkness and Doom

In the main, Communist reviews of Western literature are permeated with untenable generalizations and gloomy predictions. The following review of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, printed in *Nowa Kultura* (Warsaw), January 31, 1954 is typical. It harps on the dearth of good writing in American and the moral and artistic decline of leading authors:

"Hemingway's novel . . . is anti-rational, anti-social and anti-humanitarian. . . . The feeling of disappoint-

ment one gets on reading it is even stronger when one considers that this book appeared after a long period of expectation, after years of silence, not only on the part of the author of *The Old Man and the Sea*, but also on the part of all leading American writers: Faulkner, Steinbeck, Caldwell, Dos Passos—who have written nothing significant in the past fifteen years."

The Communists' gloomy appraisal of the Western literary scene would be incomplete without a statement by the chief politruk of Soviet letters, Ilya Ehrenburg. Feigning concern about the fate of Western literature, Ehrenburg rhapsodized on the "twilight of the West" in his recent article "On the Work of an Author." His comments, printed in *Nowa Kultura* (Warsaw), November 8, 1953, avoid the essential question—"Where in Russia today is there a Tolstoy, a Dostoevsky or a Pushkin—or in Poland a Mickiewicz or a Prus? And would the totalitarian climate of the Soviet world have room for them?" Instead he says:

"The twilight of the West has already ended. It was full of unclear shades, which aroused some fear and sadness. Late evening has now fallen. Every society has to have its epoch of artistic development, triumph of harmony, and abundance of great works. Such periods are called noon. Soviet society is now going through early morning; and in history, a few decades mean merely an hour. . . . In France [on the contrary] there are no longer writers like Balzac, Stendhal, Hugo, Flaubert or Zola; no Dickens, Byron or Shelley can now be found in England. Much must change if there is to be any hope for a new Dickens or a new Stendhal."

An unprejudiced critic of Western literature might accept many of the Communist criticisms as fundamentally valid. Certainly, little of what is now being written in the West—or anywhere and, any time for that matter—will survive. Equally true, the literature of the last fifteen years has probably not been as impressive as that of the previous forty. But "plateaus" of cultural development are common and if it be a "plateau" in the West now, it is a very high one. As long as Western writing can boast of Hemingway, Thomas Mann, T. S. Eliot, Sean O'Casey, Jean-Paul Sartre, Faulkner, Dylan Thomas, Albert Camus, and Graham Greene, to mention only a few of the best known, it is in little danger of dying. No doubt, Communist literary standards differ from those of the West, but clearly neither the Soviet Union nor its Satellites have produced anything like the talented group above, nor any writers with the stature of those in pre-Communist Russia.

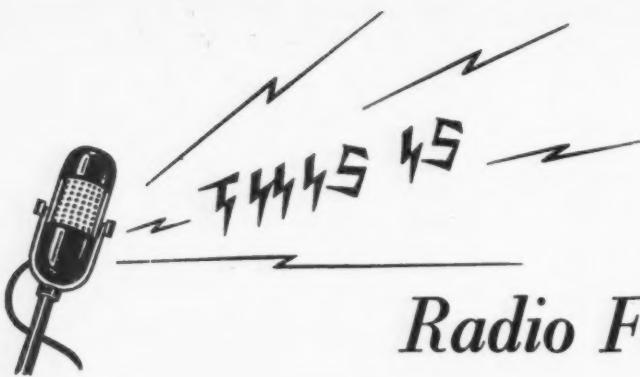
No Recourse

The Hungarian Secret police arrested two citizens but shortly after released one of them. Before the freed man left the station he managed to ask the one who was detained: "What did you confess to?"

"I confessed that I bought sugar on the black market."

"Why did you confess it, for heaven's sake?"

"I couldn't help it; the man who interrogated me had sold me the sugar."



Radio Free Europe

Tonight, in the countries behind the Iron Curtain, men, women and children will gather around radios tuned to the voices of their countrymen in the West, bringing them the news of the free world, the knowledge that they are not forgotten, and the hope of their future liberation. Radio Free Europe, operating as a home service from abroad, broadcasts over a network of 22 transmitters to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania, competing directly with all Satellite Communist stations.

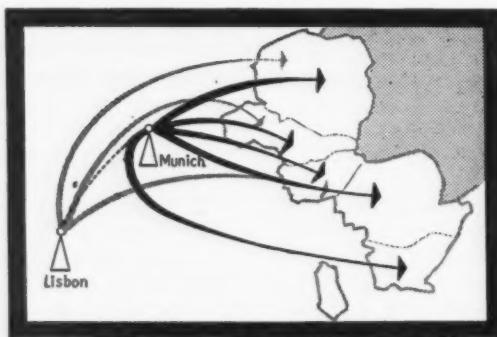
This is the Voice of Free Czechoslovakia . . .

The Slovak Purge

Last Saturday night, Radio Bratislava suddenly addressed the Slovaks as "dear listeners," and then proceeded to talk for two hours. When the Communist government indulges in friendliness, everyone must watch out, either for his pocket—to see if some new financial "reform" is brewing—or for his leisure time—to see if the regime will ask you to work Sundays as well—or friends ought to ask each other if they are still free. The regime has never yet given out a friendly word free of charge. And when it starts addressing the Slovaks with "dear listeners," the Slovaks should immediately look to what is happening to their self-government. Having listened to an address introduced by "dear listeners" you usually come out having less than you had before.

The dear listeners listened on Wednesday, on Thursday, on Friday, and on Saturday last, as usual, but on Saturday night the government announced to them, suddenly, that for all these four days, behind closed doors in a secret trial, five Slovak Communist leaders have been tried and sentenced, that everything was over now, and done with, and the dear listeners should therefore take additional note that, once again, somebody had disappeared: this time the entire former leadership of the Slovak Communist Party.

Dear listener, pray note before all that the period of *secret trials* has been initiated. Do you have any objection? Permit the government to look closely into your eyes: but of course you have no objection. Czechoslovakia is an independent state and when, in Stalin's time, Russia staged



public propaganda trials, then the Communist government in our country also staged—independently—public propaganda trials. When now, under Malenkov, the Soviet Union holds secret trials, then the Communist government in our country—again independently and always exactly as the Soviet Union does, always the independent phonograph, always the respectfully yours—also holds secret trials. We are independent and Russia teaches us how to make politics, to write books, to play theater, to milk cows, to put out fires, to light fires, and to catch fish (our fishermen are said to have listened blushingly on learning how much better Soviet fishermen catch their fish). The Soviet Union teaches us how to vote, how to be democrats, how to plough, how to travel, how to make watches, how to speak Czech, how to evaluate our history, how to be patriotic without offending the Russians and, of course, it also teaches us how to try people. The world racked its

brain as to what Malenkov's New Course meant. While many things are uncertain in this regard, one thing is quite certain: Malenkov's course means secret trials instead of public ones. And a secret trial means things go on that do not concern everybody and therefore the government is left alone with its victims.

Radio Bratislava spoke for a long time on Saturday night but neither then nor subsequently did it divulge either the names of the judges, or of the State prosecutor, or of the defense counsels who acted in the regime trial against Husak, Novomesky and associates. The regime is ashamed of something. The judges and prosecutors came secretly and left secretly, and their names belong among the State secrets. A man without a name is like a man with a mask.

Perhaps the regime has an itinerant terrorist tribunal that travels from city to city as the executioner travels. Perhaps it dared not tell the Slovaks who tried the Slovaks. All during the trial neither judges, nor prosecutor, nor councillors revealed their identities: their voices were those of the unknown. Let the regime keep its insignificant secret. We know who was doing the trying: the regime did. The more anonymous the judges, the more the regime comes to the fore. The radio announced that prior to the pronouncing of the verdict, the court retired to consult. We know where it retired to: they all went to have a cup of coffee; they had nothing to consult about. In Communist trials the accused gets his confession all written out on a piece of paper and the court gets the verdict set down previously by the government.

At one time the Communist regime declared it would not tolerate "alien doctrines" in the country. An open trial, controlled by the public—that's alien doctrine. A secret trial—without the public's knowledge, the judges, the prosecutor, and the counsels without names, coming and going in the dead of night—that is homebred doctrine. To print in the papers everything the accused have said in their defense—that's alien doctrine. To release on radio nothing except government-picked morsels of what the accused have said—that is homebred doctrine. When the doors are closed, when the court building is guarded to prevent anybody from entering, when no witness can hear anything and no control is in existence, every word may be falsified or stifled if the regime wishes. The regime radio dared not repeat a single word of what the accused Doctor Husak said; it guarded against that as against a white-hot iron. Instead, the regime radio commentator said tersely that Doctor Husak had been insolent and stubborn. This terseness—this too is homebred doctrine. Among other things, all accused were sentenced to the loss of their civil rights. Surely none of them considered this either an unexpected or a grievous loss, as he who falls into the water hardly shrinks from a light rain. Surely they felt they had lost their civil rights long before this, since only in that way could they be brought before such a tribunal.

The regime commentator said the guilt of the accused had been proven to the full extent and continued, "We shall now take you to the courtroom, dear listeners, so you can follow the trial with us." Naturally, this was no more than a bad and exaggerated figure of speech. The regime commentator never for a moment thought of taking you to the courtroom. He knew it was forbidden to you. He thought you should listen to what he was telling you. The accused were sentenced to prison terms of from ten years to life, and you were sentenced to believe implicitly what the regime radio told you. The radio spoke of "the deep silence pervading the courtroom." You can't know, not even in this instance, whether or not it was so. Perhaps curses were heard. This is how things are: the regime commentator poses as your eyes and ears, the regime prosecutor as your conscience, and Mr. Zapotocky poses as your president.

The secret tribunal cross-examined first the meekest man: the poet, Laco Novomesky, as is every Communist poet, was braver on paper than in life. He humbly con-

Spot Announcement

The so-called voluntary recruitment of brigade-workers for the mines was a failure. Rude Pravo advises the agitprop men not to "ask" anybody but simply to "recruit" him. Workers understand perfectly this voluntary work and they say: He who goes [to the mines] stays there for good.

fessed to everything the regime demanded. But then it was Husak's turn and with him, it seems, appeared what is called a man. It is an extremely rare event for somebody to appear before a Communist tribunal who refuses to confess to having committed the nonsensical acts the list of which the regime presents him with. Yet, it is evident that this is what happened. Husak refused to confess. The regime radio was unable to quote a single phrase of his testimony. In this instance, not the accused but the regime radio confessed. It confessed that Husak had repudiated the other accused. This, as all will readily guess, means nothing if not that he told them they were cowards who cravenly lie out of fear. Because of this stubbornness—to use the word of the regime commentator, who was forbidden the use of a more apt word—Husak was sentenced to the severest punishment of all, to life imprisonment.

The true meaning of the trial, however, is that Slovak self-government has been sentenced to a life-long prison term. This was a trial against Slovak self-government. In the future, every Slovak should be afraid to think of self-government. What the anonymous State prosecutor—from somewhere or other—called "bourgeois nationalism"—a hundred times during the trial, was the concept of Slovak self-government. . . . The accused Husak is reported to have said that he had committed no crime, only a deviation. But the truth is that he had not even committed a deviation. The matter for which the mysterious Bratislava tribunal sentenced the Slovak Communists was the general line of the Communist Party as it existed until 1946.

Once, more, it is revealed that the Communist are unable to change the trend of their policy other than in a barbarous way. On each such occasion they executed somebody or sentenced him to life imprisonment. Take care all of you, Messrs Communists: anyone of you can be destroyed next year for having followed the general Party line in the current year. The Communist treads a narrow path between precipices: on his left looms the danger of being convicted of disobedience; on the right the danger of being convicted tomorrow for having obeyed today. Slansky and his ten associates, Husak and his four associates did not believe in these two dangers and where are they now? Until 1946, the widest possible self-government of Slovakia was Communist dogma. Why? Because the Communists expected to win a majority in Slovakia. Since 1946 the dogma of Communist policy was that Slovakia did not deserve self-government. Why? Because the elections of that year showed that the Communists were unable to win the majority in Slovakia.

A normal political party would quietly adopt a new policy. But the Communist Party is unhumanly arrogant. Notoriously it terms itself always right. Whenever it errs, someone has to atone for it personally. The Party never says that the leadership has erred; it always maintains it has been betrayed. Therefore, every Communist and every Communist collaborationist, is in perpetual jeopardy. He who carries out today's course is at the mercy of some future course. What do you expect from the future, Messrs Communists, should the Party line change once more? A brutal hand will thrust itself among you as among birds in the nests....

And of course there was yet another meaning to the Bratislava trial. It is no mere coincidence that by now all leaders of the Prague revolution and of the Slovak uprisings have been liquidated. Whoever did anything independently for the nation and whenever he did so, may he tremble, since he thereby curtailed Russian fame. According to a standard theory the Czechs and Slovaks never did anything for themselves—on their own. It is much safer for writers to translate Russian books than to write their own. The most secure is the Czech and Slovak and the Communist who, during the Prague revolution and the Slovak uprising, sat in the cellar. The gods are said to be envious, yet their envy is nothing compared to Russian envy.

A Fairy Tale

Once upon a time, beyond the Iron Curtain, there lived a man who gaily jumped out of bed at five in the morning, filled with pep and "Socialist" consciousness, despite the fact that he had come home from a Party meeting at midnight the night before. And although it was Sunday, the man rushed happily to the factory to prepare his machines for the following week's work. On his way he conscientiously read the Sunday issue of Szabad Nep, smiling brightly and having only one complaint: aside from the proclamations concerning the May 1 work offerings, he could find no invitations to other voluntary work contributions in the paper. When he arrived at the factory, the first thing he did was to ask for a wage cut; for although he had overfulfilled his norm by 300 percent he still felt he wasn't working hard enough for his pay. During his lunch hour he signed a peace loan and learned Russian, but still he felt he had not done his duty towards the Party. The Party also learned about this man and they began to search for him. They wanted to see this comrade, such a model comrade. They searched and they searched and they even asked the AVH to help, but in vain. For—as it turned out—such people exist only in fairy tales.

This is the Voice of Free Hungary . . .

Lysenko Laughter

Announcer: You are now about to hear the political cabaret of the Free Tongue entitled the People's Democratic

Kaleidoscope. The Free Tongue comes to you every last Sunday of each month at the same time on the dial of the Voice of Free Hungary in order to make you forget—if only for a brief 30 minutes—your everyday worries and to bring a smile to your weary faces....

Ladies and gentlemen. We are going to begin today's political cabaret with our old well-known friends, Pali Polgar and Victor Bolse. They are going to deal with the Lysenko problem, which has been giving a certain kind of headache to some Party functionaries since Khrushchev gave his speech. Scenery: the usual Budapest milk bar where Palo Polgar sits behind a glass of water. The gong announces the arrival of Victor Bolse.

Bolse: Freedom, Comrade Polgar.

Polgar: Just be patient, Mr. Bolse, that'll come too.

Bolse: Well, Comrade Polgar, what's your opinion of this Khrushchev speech?

Polgar: Mischief?

Bolse: KHRUSHCHEV! you stupid Rightist Social Democrat! Don't you know Khrushchev?

Polgar: Why, did he say he knows me?

Bolse: No, but you really ought to know who he is. He's the one who proved that Lysenko is nothing but a clerical imperialist quack.

Polgar: Wait a second, Mr. Bolse, who's that Lysenko?

Bolse: Don't you even know that? Lysenko was the one who claimed he could change nature.

Polgar: Just like my wife.

Bolse: How's that?

Polgar: She also claimed she could change my nature.

Bolse: That's different. Lysenko was a Soviet scientist and for a long time everybody talked about him until finally Krushchev proved he was a quack.

Polgar: I get it. And now everybody talks about Khrushchev.

Bolse: Of course. Because he proved Lysenko's teachings were wrong.

Polgar: Why, what did Lysenko say?

Bolse: Well, he said that the picture of the entire Soviet land would change, so that no one would know it any more if his teachings were followed. Where there were mountains, there would be valleys, and instead of deserts, blooming acres.

Polgar: I can imagine what a mess Rakosi is in now.

Bolse: What do you mean?

Polgar: Because he was a disciple of Lysenko too, no doubt about it.

Bolse: What's Rakosi got to do with Lysenko?

Polgar: He also changed the picture of the Hungarian land. Where there was a flourishing country before, now there's an enormous slum.

Bolse: (angrily) Comrade Polgar. Will you listen to what I have to say about Lysenko or shall I call the AVH [the secret police]?

Polgar: Well, if you have such convincing arguments.... All right, go on with Lysenko, I'm all ears.

Bolse: Okay, just imagine, this Lysenko crossbred different species of animals and created entirely new domestic animals.

Polgar: I see. . . . And since then the old, reactionary domestic animals—calves, pigs, ducks and hens—have been taken off the market.

Bolse: No!

Polgar: Prices went up, huh?

Bolse: No!

Polgar: Or only Party members get them?

Bolse: Nooo! That wasn't Lysenko's crime! He didn't do away with the old domestic animals.

Polgar: That's strange. I scarcely see them any more. And by the way, I don't see the new ones either.

Bolse: That wasn't why Krushchev attacked Lysenko. He did it because Lysenko crossbred the watermelon, tangerine and the flea.

Polgar: And?

Bolse: He got a watermelon with a lot of divisions and no seed, because the seeds just jumped out by themselves.

Polgar: That's a crime?

Bolse: Sure is, because to Khrushchev, Lysenko's discovery ridiculed the glorious Soviet constitution.

Polgar: How?

Bolse: Well, now everybody says that Lysenko's watermelon is just like the Soviet constitution, a lot of departments and no seed. . . .

This is the Voice of Free Poland . . .

The Drive to Increase Productivity

Communist propaganda in Poland has for a long time, for its own purposes, linked the problem of raising work productivity with the problem of improving the standard of living of the population. This argument was clearly put in the infamous directive of January 3, when the Communists, aiming for a general introduction of piece work, tried to tell the workers that real wages were dependent only on the productivity of the worker's labor. A similar argument was widely used both in Bierut's report at the 9th Plenum, and in the pre-Congress Theses.

The report of the State Commission for Economic Planning for last year (1953) throws a vivid ray of light on the regime's achievements in the field of increasing work productivity. It was announced in that report that the productivity of a *single worker* had increased by 10.5 percent. Here it must be strongly emphasized that this figure applies to the productivity of a single worker. For usually the increase in work productivity is calculated not per single worker, but in man-hours.

What is the difference? The increase in productivity per single worker is the result of a simple mathematical calculation. One simply divides the growth of industrial production by the number of people employed in industry as a whole. The figure thus obtained does not, of course, make any allowance for work done as overtime, Sunday work, and other Soviet methods of exploiting the worker.

But the fact that the figure used in the report applies to the productivity of a single worker has still another purpose. The communique of the State Commission for

Economic Planning itself clearly states that if the increase in work productivity were to be calculated in man-hours, then the progress in this field would be seen to be far smaller. In this unusual frankness the authors of the report undoubtedly implied fear of a further fall of work-productivity per man-hour. In this most important sector of economic activity, which will decide whether the Six Year Plan is fulfilled or not, a serious gap has been created, caused by the human crisis.

For we remember that the Six Year Plan anticipated that in 1955 productivity would have increased by more than two-thirds. And so, on the average, productivity should be increasing by 13 percent annually. If it is true, as the Communists maintain, that the increase in productivity is mainly due to mechanization of the production processes, then the *percentage* figures for productivity should increase every year. And so the published figure of 10.5 percent indicates a relative fall in the worker's output, for in 1952 productivity increased by 13 percent. Therefore, the percentage of increase in productivity gets smaller year by year, despite the more general mechanization of production processes.

Let us now look at the problem of productivity from another angle. The same report of the State Commission for Economic Planning gives the increase in global industrial production as 17.5 percent. We also learn from the report that this production increase was brought about, *inter alia*, by a 7 percent increase of the labor force in factories and mines. In addition, production increases in a number of key industries, including the mining industry, were achieved by employing a large amount of overtime. The growth of global industrial production was thus achieved mainly by increasing the number of workers and by increasing the time worked by factory teams.

What, then, remains for the factor of the increase in the productivity of the individual worker? As can be seen from the resolutions adopted at the Second Congress, the regime's economic plans continue to be based on the work competition, the extension of the piece work system, and the general application of norms which condition the worker's wages. The regime still does not understand the causes of the relative fall in the worker's productivity. It does not understand the human crisis.

The published figure of 10.5 percent in the report was itself reduced by the comment that it did not apply to work productivity per man-hour. And at the same time Minc admitted beyond any shadow of doubt the exhaustion of the labor market. And so we are faced with two very important phenomena: on the one hand, exhaustion of the labor reserve, and on the other, the impossibility of achieving the percentages of increased worker productivity as called for in the Six Year Plan. The exhaustion of labor reserves, and the exhaustion of the individual worker, will characterize the period in which the economic resolutions adopted at the Second Congress are to be fulfilled. And it is this which shows up the complete lack of realism of these resolutions.

Current Developments

Everyone will probably agree that "broad democratic principles" presupposes the two following conditions: first, full publicity, and second, election to all functions. It would be absurd to speak of democracy without publicity, that is, a publicity which extends beyond the circle of the membership of the organization. . . . No one would ever call an organization that is hidden from everyone but its members by a veil of secrecy, a democratic organization.

Lenin, What Is To Be Done?

ECONOMIC shortcomings and New Course directions received major attention at Party Congresses in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Low worker productivity, rising production costs and lagging agriculture were bitterly criticized and coal shortages, meat scarcities and transportation difficulties underscored. Communist leaders called for increased discipline among workers and managers, and condemned "over-bureaucratization," violations of top Party commands, and "excessive liberalism" in economic and Party organs. Recent New Course measures elsewhere in the region included an income tax reduction in Romania, attempts to improve stockbreeding, internal trade and consumer goods production in Bulgaria, and plans to increase discipline and work incentive on Polish kolkhozes. Throughout the Soviet orbit, regime spokesmen emphasized that while the New Course program will be continued for some time to come, those officials, managers, workers and peasants who interpreted it as a spring-board for deviations, laxity or undiscipline were sadly mistaken.

Czechoslovakia

On July 11, the Tenth Party Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party opened in Prague, attended by Party delegates from the entire country as well as 33 delegations representing Communist Parties abroad. The Soviet delegation was headed by First Party Secretary Nikita Khrushchev. His presence probably was intended to add to the pomp of the meeting which, in the main, seemed to suffer from lack of sufficient preparation, as well as to focus attention on agriculture, since he is the architect of Soviet farm policy. One of the chief reasons for this may have been that the original program of the Congress, outlined by the Party Central Committee last December, had to be changed in April to conform with Soviet area-wide plans. On the first agenda, the regime had included a new Five

Year Plan for 1956-60; this plan, although still in preparation, was dropped from the agenda in April and replaced by directives for 1955 and a three year (1954-57) emergency plan to remedy the farm crisis. Also, changes in Party statutes affirming the "collective leadership" principle were added to the original agenda to coincide with Soviet commands.

Overshadowing all other problems discussed at the Congress were farm shortcomings. Prime Minister Siroky spoke on the subject in detail, although he added nothing essentially new to official editorials and speeches made earlier in the season. Siroky claimed that the crop area is more than 500,000 hectares lower than the pre-war area and that, while yields in general are approximately the same, the yields of sugar beet, potatoes and corn are shamefully lower than production in the First Republic. Siroky also said that the farm labor shortage must be solved and that within the next three years about 320,000 workers would be diverted back into agriculture. Further, Siroky underscored the meat shortage, attributing deficiencies to the fodder scarcity, the high death rate of young cattle and sucklings and incorrect husbandry techniques. Tractor stations, he said, were poorly equipped in men and machines, work on collectives was unsatisfactory and discipline had to be introduced on State farms, which work without sufficient planning and perspective. Significantly, Siroky emphasized further collectivization as the chief remedy for lagging farm output, stating that "the crucial problem of our village policy is to secure further development of agricultural cooperatives." This is to be achieved by giving collectives preference in mechanization, credits, and in other farm concessions designed to increase yields, in order to make kolkhozes more attractive to the independent peasantry. According to Siroky, the greatest shortcoming on collectives is inefficient administration: "They received insufficient organizational and expert help."

... A considerable number of collectives did not know how to secure enough fodder for their common stock. . . . Serious mistakes also were made in organizing livestock production and the wage policy. . . . Our mistakes and shortcomings . . . were exploited particularly by kulaks, many of whom infiltrated the collectives for the purpose of achieving their complete disintegration with the help of international reactionaries." Siroky's statement confirms earlier information that, despite New Course farm concessions, peasant resistance has continued, and even mounted, that peasants still slaughter livestock to evade quotas, that deliveries are not met, and that many kolkhozes have been dissolved while others have deteriorated.

Production Problems

Other economic problems underscored by Siroky included mounting production costs, low productivity, poor quality production, waste, absenteeism, job-hopping, low coal output and transportation lags. Siroky also claimed that "security" measures were entirely unsatisfactory, that managers evade responsibility and have a "conciliatory attitude towards violation of State and work discipline." Further, initiative is sadly lacking among both workers and managers, and the number of qualified officials is inadequate. These problems testify to the widespread negligence and apathy prevailing in industry, and to the continued hostility of workers, particularly in the mines and on the railroads. Siroky summarized immediate tasks as follows:

"1. To achieve—within the shortest possible time—a substantial increase in farm production to ensure a sufficient quantity of food—particularly meat—for the increasing consumption of the people, as well as a sufficient amount of raw materials for the light and food industries.

"2. To extend—speedily and effectively—the coal, power and ore basis in order to secure development of industry and other branches of the national economy and to improve consumer supplies.

"3. To improve the quality and production of consumer items in wide demand.

"4. To substantially improve the standard of work in railroad and truck transport.

"5. To firmly establish in the entire economy a system of economic devices [to increase economy and cut production costs], which are necessary prerequisites for further development of the policy of price cuts and raising the living standard."

Other speakers at the Congress, especially First Party Secretary Antonin Novotny, underscored similar shortcomings. Novotny also discussed the international situation; he claimed that while the Party and Government believed in the peaceful cooperation of nations, there were "forces in the world which did not want peace" and that it was therefore necessary for the country to increase its defense power. On the domestic front, Novotny claimed that bureaucracy was rife in the Party and State administration, and that there were numerous violations of Party commands. President Zapotocky, who opened the Congress,



Wife: "What's this? Are you going to a masquerade?"

Husband: "No. I'm going to a meeting where my work is to be criticized."

Urzica (Bucharest), February 28, 1954

stated that its main purpose was to evaluate fulfillment of the Party's general line. Speaking more briefly than either Siroky or Novotny, the President discussed the liquidation of the "Slanskyite clique" and claimed that "criticism and self-criticism were indispensable in the struggle for further development." Minister of Culture Kopecky spoke about schematism in art, but pointed out that the New Course did not mean "liberalism" nor allow for literary attacks against the Party itself or the Party's program.

Soviet Party Secretary Khrushchev and Czechoslovak Minister of National Defense Alexej Cepicka devoted their speeches chiefly to the international and military situation. Cepicka assured the Congress of the Army's loyalty to the working class, stating that 98.4 percent of all officers come from the working class. He also pointed out that heavy industry produces not only machinery and implements for agriculture and industry, but "excellent weapons for new fighting techniques. There are only a few countries in the world which can produce complex modern weapons with greater success." Top Soviet man Khrushchev placed great emphasis on Soviet strength and

declared that any acts of Western aggression would be crushed. Speaking to a mass meeting in Prague on June 15, after the Congress had ended, Khrushchev again asserted the supremacy of Soviet war potential, claiming that the USSR had developed the hydrogen bomb long before the "capitalists."

No Personnel Changes

A significant feature of the Congress was that no major personnel changes took place. All the top Communists present were reinstalled in the new Politburo, despite the numerous criticisms on work in various ministries. It is interesting to note, however, that the Central Committee, which numbered 97 members in 1949, now has only 84 members. More than 50 members have been eliminated by death, execution, purge, imprisonment or demotion. All the prominent surviving members of the war-time "London Communist group"—such as Minister of Manpower Vaclav Nosek, and Deputies A. Hodanova-Spurna and Josef Valo—have been demoted or dropped. So have former Minister of National Security Ladislav Kopriva, former Ambassador to Washington Vladimir Prochazka, former Minister of Foreign Trade Antonin Gregor and former Speaker of Parliament Oldrich John, a close collaborator of Zdenek Fierlinger. From available information, no Presidium or Party Chairmen were elected at the Congress, and the chief emphasis was placed on collective leadership. The new Czechoslovak Politburo includes Karel Bacilek, Rudolf Barak, Alexej Cepicka, Jaromir Dolansky, Zdenek Fierlinger, Vaclav Kopecky, Antonin Novotny, Viliam Siroky, and Antonin Zapotocky. The only new members are Barak and Fierlinger. Ludmila Jankovcova and Otakar Simunek are Politburo candidates.

In all, the Congress revealed little that was new and merely reiterated previously discussed weaknesses. The official tone at the meeting appeared more severe than Communist pronouncements of last summer, especially with regard to laxity and "liberalism" in the New Course, and the need to oppose kulaks and enemies. The emergency measures taken to strengthen critical sectors of the economy received primary attention and showed that so far the New Course had solved little.

National Committee Elections

On May 20, *Rude Pravo* (Prague) published the results of the May 16 National Committee elections, which followed an intensive campaign to recruit the support of the masses in the local administration. The results disclosed the usual rigged unanimity: according to *Rude Pravo* (Prague) 93.6 percent of the votes went to the Communist-sponsored National Front candidates, and 98.3 percent of the electorate went to the polls.

The election campaign, which opened on January 10 with the publication of two new draft bills on National Committee work, formed part of the Communists' overall election propaganda drive, and was conducted with mounting intensity until election eve. Although voting was not made compulsory, the press, radio and propaganda made it sufficiently clear that the government ex-

pected "everyone to cast a supporting ballot" and thereby express "active interest in Socialist building." The extent of the pressure exerted was suggested by *Rude Pravo* (Prague), May 16, which issued the following indirect warning:

"Not to take part in the elections, to vote against the National Front candidates, would mean joining the ranks of enemies of the Republic and opposing everything in the National Front's program and in one's own country. All voters, all citizens, will bear this in mind today."

Election Tactics

The same tactics were used in the entire election procedure. In practice, the National Front, which was "in charge of the elections," nominated only one candidate in each precinct and the people attending election meetings had no choice but to approve the official selection. Similarly, the name of only one candidate appeared on the ballot. Further, various methods were employed to get the voters out. For example, the trade union daily, *Prace* (Prague), May 14, reported that in many communities the voters had "decided" to go to the polls en masse—that is, in groups led by regime propagandists. People confined to their beds because of illness were visited by "flying election commissions" equipped with special ballot boxes. Cars and ambulances were made available for others.

When the voter arrived at the polls, his identity was checked and he was given three easily identifiable ballots (for a local, district and regional Committee member) and sent into a booth where he was supposed to "vote." However, once he had finished the voter was required to drop his folded ballot into a box placed in front of election commission members. This process clearly served to intimidate the voter and prejudice the outcome further. According to the official results published in *Rude Pravo* (Prague), May 20, 27,938 of the votes cast were invalid, and 546,015 voted against the official candidate. These figures give no actual clue to the real extent of opposition because of the high pressure tactics used and the meaninglessness of regime-computed statistics. From various press reports, it seems clear that the elections did not accomplish the desired purpose of gaining mass support. In a report to the Party Congress, First Party Secretary Novotny tried to look at the bright side of the picture, or rather, to create an impression which was revealing though far from the truth: "Six percent of the votes were against the regime candidates," he said, "that is really a small percentage. And those votes even include many which expressed disapproval of this or that candidate, but not disapproval of our system or policy."

Labor Shortage

In an effort to eliminate critical labor shortages in various sectors of the economy, the Czechoslovak Ministries of Manpower and Education drafted a May 20 appeal to teachers, students and parents, urging that high school graduates take jobs in mining, agriculture and construction,

as well as in other critical branches of the economy. The appeal, published in *Rude Pravo* (Prague), May 20, pointed out that the choice of occupation in a "Socialist economy" should be based neither on desire nor preference, but on the nation's needs: "The problem of choosing a job in a country with a planned economy cannot be left to chance but must be harmonized with the interests of the State plan of economic development." Developing this theme, the appeal stated that it was the task of teachers and other educational workers to influence youth "wisely and pedagogically" in deciding on places of work—which means, in effect, that young people will continue to be "directed" into fulfilling the Party's manpower requirements. The appeal not only threw light on Communist coal shortages, low farm output and slow construction work, but also revealed that young people were reluctant to enter these branches of the economy.

"Educational Resistance"

That working conditions in certain industries do not appeal to youth, was further indicated in an editorial in *Svobodne Slovo* (Prague), May 27, which complained that young people seem to be looking for "soft berths." The newspaper said that while too many students apply to teachers' colleges and the four-year Secondary School of Economics, the Industrial Secondary School of Coal and Ore Mining obtained only one-fourth of its prescribed enrollment and the Industrial Secondary School of Construction only two-thirds. The newspaper *Prace* (Prague), May 25, tried a more positive approach, stating enthusiastically that: "Young people who graduate from eight-year secondary schools have great opportunities in selecting their future labor assignments. They have the chance to be placed in the most important sectors of our economy—in agriculture, construction work and mining."

The appeal for agricultural workers is in line with the regime's plan to divert masses of workers to the farms to make up for lack of machinery, shortage of farm labor and to bring about an improved agriculture. The regime probably hopes that young workers—if persuaded sufficiently—will attack their jobs with energy and help improve work morale, which according to recent reports is low both in mines and on construction sites. For example, *Rude Pravo* (Prague), May 25, declared:

"Work morale has weakened. On some construction sites . . . many people just stroll through the canteens, settle their private affairs during work hours—as if work were something secondary. Lunchtime breaks are extended and in many places foremen do not even know who is at work at that time. . . . Destruction of bricks, lumber, roofing, waste of cement and other building material is common, with only few exceptions. . . . Yet there are complaints about a labor shortage."

Clearly, in addition to labor shortage, there is widespread labor discontent. That youth undoubtedly will not accept this program of semi-compulsory labor assignments with much good will, considering their present reluctance, is more than likely.

Hungary

The Third Party Congress, held in Hungary May 24-30, provided insight into the many problems confronting the regime almost a year after the New Course had been introduced. Speeches made by First Party Secretary Matyas Rakosi and Prime Minister Imre Nagy, as well as all other top Communists, showed that in industry poor quality production and low productivity were seriously hampering regime plans, and that in agriculture peasant resistance, lags in deliveries and taxes, and inadequate farm output continued to plague top economic leaders. Many speakers at the Congress underscored the high percentage of waste in the economy and the huge losses caused by production rejects. Erno Gero, former economic dictator of Hungary, stated that since July 1, the wage base had been exceeded by 830 million *forints*, that the losses caused by defective production in enterprises of the Ministry of Smelting alone had amounted to 400 million *forints* within one year, and that the value of production per capita was 6.6 percent lower during the first quarter of 1954 than in the same period of 1953. First Party Secretary Matyas Rakosi blamed poor productivity and rising production costs chiefly on the fact that quantitative fulfillment of the Plan was the only aspect of production emphasized. As quoted by *Szabad Nep* (Budapest), May 25, he said:

"Managers neglect the economic side of the question. We are unable to create strict discipline in the majority of our industrial plants, although the masses of workers are demanding this of us. Work and wage discipline is lax—far too lax. This is due to the fact that our Party organs, Party functionaries, as well as trade union functionaries and economic leaders often tolerate lowering of norms and violation of wage discipline. . . . We were unable to achieve satisfactory results in the development of productivity because neither our enterprises nor our ministries were sufficiently concerned with improving technical know-how—with introducing reforms and good production methods which had proved their worth."

Rakosi also claimed that the State administration was bureaucratic and overcentralized, that workers neglect machinery and evade responsibilities and that discipline and order were sadly lacking in production. These shortcomings indicate that in spite of New Course concessions, inefficient management, worker apathy and absenteeism, and official demands for speedy production continue to take their toll of the economy. Reports on agriculture testified to large-scale dissolution of kolkhozes, poor livestock production and continued peasant resistance. From Rakosi's speech it appeared that as much as 51 percent of the kolkhoz members had quit collectives in the New Course, and that 12 percent of the existing kolkhozes had been dissolved. Because of its farm troubles the regime apparently is taking a stronger line against kulaks than was indicated last July. At the same time, the regime saw fit to point out that collectivization remains the Party's

chief goal in agriculture. In discussing the peasant question, Rakosi said:

"In the past, it often occurred that kulak restriction was applied [erroneously] against middle peasants. The correct policy of kulak restriction has turned, more than once, into kulak liquidation. Since last June, the opposite has been true. There is hardly any noticeable fight against kulaks, and often they are treated as middle peasants. . . . In the past few years, some middle peasants have come under kulak influence. This influence can now be suppressed, since instructions in connection with agricultural development are satisfying the middle peasantry and bringing them again close to their ally, the worker class. . . . We must continue the policy of restriction of kulaks. If the kulak fails to complete his deliveries, pay his taxes, if he agitates against [collectives] and our People's Democracy, we must apply the strongest measures. In this respect, we must end the liberalism [infecting] many of our Party and State organs, whose harmful effects are already noticeable in the village. . . . In developing the Socialist sector of agriculture, we must observe primarily, the cooperatives. We should not forget for one single minute that for the building of Socialism in the village, this must be considered the main task, and that sooner or later every peasant will be convinced of its correctness and shall follow this path. . . . It is the Party and Government's task to elaborate in detail those positive instructions whose result will be that the superiority of the [collectives] will be completely developed, so that they become examples of Socialist agricultural large-scale farming. It is also the Party's task to continue the healthy numerical development of kolkhozes."

Another problem underscored at the Congress was the Party's failure to become an effective instrument in carrying out top Party commands. Many speakers complained about the failure to implement the principle of "collective leadership" and "inner-Party democracy," while Rakosi revealed that in recent months the Party not only had been weakened by "leftist sectarianism"—that is, adherence to former policies—but "by rightist opportunism" as well. This deviation has been manifested in excessive "liberalism," laxity, undiscipline and violation of top Party commands. According to Rakosi, the Party's most important future task is to strengthen its organization and improve work of administrative agencies. For this purpose, the Congress decided that Party groups will now be established within non-Party organizations and will exercise control over their activities. A significant factor in this decision probably was the recent falling off of membership in mass organizations as well as violations of wage and work discipline by managers and workers. Rakosi announced, for example, that the number of women in the Democratic Association of Hungarian Women now totals 560,000; in 1952, the organization numbered one million members. Similarly, membership in the Hungarian Communist Youth Organization has dropped from 659,000 in 1952 to 577,000.

In discussing the regime's overall economic program, Rakosi revealed that within two years the entire Satellite

economy probably would be coordinated under the Council for Mutual Economic Aid (Comecon). He announced that the Hungarian Five Year Plan ending on December 31, 1954 will not be followed immediately by another Five Year Plan, but that one year will be devoted to "preparations." In 1956, the next Five Year Plan will be launched, "continuing the spirit of the new economic program." According to Rakosi, the Plan will place "much greater emphasis on consumer goods, and food will be a key feature." This statement indicates that the two or three year transition period originally estimated as necessary to restore the imbalance in the economy now appears insufficient, and that the present New Course policy will have to be continued for some time longer. The year 1955 will probably be used to eliminate specific weak spots, such as defective production, low productivity, insufficient livestock production and Party and administrative incompetence. Whether this much can be accomplished remains to be seen.

Bulgaria

In Sofia on May 31 the Council of Ministers and the Central Committee of the Bulgarian CP convoked a conference on stockbreeding. Minister of Agriculture Todorov presided at the meeting and Central Committee Member George Traikov gave the main report on the problem under consideration to an audience which included such top Communists as Chervenkov, Zhivkov, Michailov, Yugov and Chankov. According to the June 1 *Rabotnicheskoye Delo* (Sofia), Traikov reported that at the end of 1953 the collective (TKZS) and State farm (DZS) sectors owned 24.5 percent of the cattle, 44.4 percent of the horses, 31.4 per cent of the sheep and goats, 24.2 percent of the hogs, and 16.3 percent of the fowl. When seen against the background of the TKZS comprising 60.5 percent of the arable land and containing more than half of the rural population, it is obvious that the overwhelming part of the livestock on farms is in the private sector. Moreover, since in 1939 Bulgaria did not include Southern Dobrudja (some 2,693 square miles of rich farm land with a large number of sheep and cattle), Traikov's statement that the livestock level was "still below the 1939 level" is a factual indictment of Communist failure in agriculture. He reported an "alarming decrease in cows," a 3.6 percent decline compared to 1952, and noted a special shortage in the number of cows in TKZS, particularly near large cities.

Sheep breeding is also unsatisfactory with average wool production per capita in 1953 2.8 kilos in DZS and 2.1 kilos in TKZS. Because of this, Bulgaria is forced to import large quantities of wool in spite of the fact "that the number of sheep in Bulgaria per 1,000 decares is the highest in Europe." Hog breeding has also failed to meet the demand for lard and meat; the number of hogs is inadequate, hog mortality high, and fertility unsatisfactory in the "Socialist sector." Fowl development is "extremely unsatisfactory" as well, fowl mortality high, and egg production so low that it has "barely reached pre-war levels." Dray horses are also in short supply.

Traikov criticized in detail conditions on collectives and State farms, pointing out that "In many TKZS, during 1953, all male lambs were slaughtered. . . In the DZS, 26 percent of the fowl died. . . During the current year, more than 500 mares miscarried in the Russe district" due to improper care of pregnant mares, and calves in the TKZS were also given poor care.

Traikov also severely criticized the handling of the fodder, manpower and building problems in the State sector. The fodder base remains inadequate so that during 1953 the TKZS were able to obtain only 63.3 percent of the necessary concentrated fodder, 57 percent of the hay, and 48 percent of the root fodder. Some 153,000 hectares of fodder were not even sown. The great lag in farm building has continued so that of 3,372 planned, only 700 had been begun by the end of April 1954. Because of poor living conditions and low salaries, farm labor turnover remains a permanent problem.

Traikov concluded, in New Course style, by insisting that the further development of stockbreeding depended mainly on the independent farmers who at present own two-thirds of the entire livestock population, and he implied that the regime was committed to helping the private breeders to increase their livestock population and improve animal husbandry as a whole.

Internal Trade and Consumer Goods

In May, the Bulgarian regime issued two decrees stressing the importance of improving the quantity and quality of consumer goods production. The decrees revealed that production rejects and low productivity are hampering Communist plans and that from the ministries down to the rank and file workers, apathy and negligence prevail. The first decree, published in *Otechestven Front* (Sofia), May 11, complained that the Ministries for Heavy Industry, Foreign Trade and Supply, as well as the Central Cooperative Union, do not make sufficient quantities of raw materials and spare parts available to the light and food industries, thereby preventing improvements in variety and quality. Further, industrial combines and labor cooperatives delay considerably in servicing the population and are expensive. According to the decree, the result of these and other shortcomings is that the people's demands for consumer goods are not met. For example, while the number of shoes produced in 1953 increased twofold over 1948, "their quality and variety . . . still does not satisfy the working people. Moreover [overall] shoe production is still inadequate." The decree states that in 1954, production of soft and elastic shoe leather must be achieved in no less than 16 colors. Tanning must improve, the assortment must increase, and the manufacture of high-quality shoes must amount to at least 520,000. The decree also stipulates that the variety of other consumer goods must be increased and that by the end of 1955 production of cotton fabrics must increase from 2 to 12 times over 1953; of woolen fabrics between 1.5 and 5.3 times; enamelware by 1-2.5 times; and items such as shovels 2.5 times, pickaxes by 40 percent, pitchforks by 40 percent, hammers 2.5 times and wire goods and nails by at least 30 percent. With regard to the food industry, production of

canned vegetables must increase by 122 percent, canned fish at least twofold, and production of granulated and cube sugar must reach 15,000 tons. The decree also states that more varieties of meat should be made available to the public, that furniture should become more decorative and that the quality of cigarettes should improve.

The May 12 decree dealt with improvements in internal trade designed to insure better supplies to the people. The decree demanded that there not only be improvements in the quantity and quality of goods but also that the needs and desires of the people in various parts of the country be thoroughly investigated. For instance, the Ministry of Home Trade was instructed to improve the trade network so that workers have a large choice in their purchases. By 1955, 230 shops should be converted into specialty shops—30 of them delicatessens, 50 selling ready-made clothes, 40 selling shoes, 40 textiles, 30 knitted goods, 20 household goods, and 10 electrical appliances. Further, model bakeries must be established in large industrial centers and towns. The decree also declares that restaurant prices in trade, industrial and state offices and enterprises be cut, and work in canteens on building projects, in timber-producing regions and industrial centers be improved.

While both decrees are in line with the regime's New Course program to raise the living standard, it is evident that a larger supply of consumer goods depends not only on better work but also on the amount of investments made available, the number of new machines provided, and sufficient raw materials. At present, most of the machines used in light industry are obsolete and the raw material base has undergone a decline. Also, while light industrial investments have been increased, it is difficult to say whether these increases will make plan targets possible. The decrees would seem to indicate that the regime is relying chiefly on better management and work morale for the success of its New Course consumer program, although interesting statements on market research, "Socialist merchandising," etc., may be further confirmation that some attempt to satisfy consumers is actually being made.

Price Concessions

On June 8, Radio Sofia reported that the Council of Ministers, in order to encourage the producers of cotton, tobacco, milk and other industrial crops, had lowered the prices of consumer goods sold to the producers of these products, providing their deliveries are fulfilled. The new prices were reported as being considerably lower than the standard State retail prices.

The cost of flour, according to the broadcast, is 37.72 percent lower than the regular price, barley is 23.25 percent lower, unbleached cotton is 32.88-33.35 percent less, percale is 25.70-28.16 percent less, and oxford cotton is 17.38-28.24 percent lower. The prices of wheat, rye and corn have been reduced by 22.34-23.25 percent.

Radio Sofia also said that the Council of Ministers had decreed new "norms" to further encourage cotton and silk growers, but no details were given. The "norms" determine what proportions of payment will be made in cash and in kind when products are delivered to the State.

The news item ended with the statement that "the Council of Ministers requires the Central Cooperative Union to keep on hand a wide assortment of fabrics required by the producers of industrial crops."

Poland

In an effort to improve kolkhoz efficiency, the Polish regime recently issued a decree aimed simultaneously at pinpointing responsibility on collective farms and giving kolkhoz workers incentive. Made public in the May 21 issue of *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), the decree gave a detailed explanation of how the kolkhoz brigade system must work, introduced new production quotas, readjusted the wage system, and set new premiums for overfulfillment of quotas in order to stimulate food and livestock production. The decree reiterated the New Course emphasis that all Polish collective farms should operate on the principle of "material interestedness"—that peasants produce more when adequately compensated for their efforts.

In contrast to previous practice on Polish collectives, there will be permanent productive brigades and permanent field brigades—both are included in the kolkhoz statutes but have not been applied to daily work. *Trybuna Ludu* also stated that "these brigades shall have non-rotating personnel and be assigned permanent fields, horses, machines, other equipment and necessary buildings. They shall be composed of 20-50 persons. Such a field brigade should be an independent production unit, capable of servicing machinery, making full use of tractors and machines . . . and of doing all the work in the assigned fields." The decree stipulates further that from six to ten persons be assigned to cultivation of industrial plants and vegetable and seed plants requiring intensive work. Each year the cultivation of the same plants should be assigned these smaller units to facilitate specialization. The head of a brigade is appointed by the chairman of the collective, allegedly with the consent of the members, and is responsible for fulfillment of production tasks as well as the quality of work.

The decree contains a resolution of the Ministry of Agriculture on Standard Work Norms, which divides kolkhoz workers into seven categories on the basis of the amount of effort put into work, the necessary qualifications, and the value of work performed for the collective economy. This resolution is to be the basis for computing norms and wages. Those in the first category get wages amounting to 0.8 pay-day unit, those in the second category 1.0 pay-day unit, etc. The difference between each category amounts to 0.2 of a work-day unit. This sharply-defined graduated wage scale undoubtedly is designed to encourage peasants doing more difficult work than others, and, at the same time, to pay according to the actual amount of production; in effect, it is a type of farm piece-work system.

Aside from the wage resolution, the decree instructs collective farms to grant premiums, primarily in goods, to brigades, teams and individual members who have contributed to overfulfilling production norms. Unfortunately, no information was given on the actual quotas established, but from the above provisions of the decree, it appears that its chief purpose is to tighten discipline on collectives and increase the production of the individual collective peasant.

Romania

On May 18, *Scintea* (Bucharest), organ of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, announced a recent reduction in the income tax which craftsmen, tradesmen and some of those in the liberal professions must pay to the government. The paper said the purpose of the new decree was to stimulate production, and estimated that the average reduction for people it covered would be 25 percent.

The reduction affects, first, craftsmen who are self-employed or work in cooperatives; second, self-employed tradesmen; and, last, those in the liberal professions having an income (and it apparently affects only this part of their income) from other-than-ordinary sources. A lawyer who draws up a will on his own time, for instance, falls into the last category.

Scintea explained that income norms will be calculated for the three categories on the basis of the estimated yearly income—estimated, that is, by the Ministry of Finance—of the average producer in the field involved. Those in the liberal professions must pay 5 percent of this income from outside sources; craftsmen, 10 percent of their yearly income; and tradesmen, 15 percent. A craftsman, however, pays 20 percent more than he ordinarily would if he hires more than three assistants, as must tradesmen with more than one helper. In the past, craftsmen paid a tax of 25 percent on a minimum income, those in the liberal professions, 20 percent, and tradesmen 40 percent. As the income exceeded the minimum, the percentage went up too.

It is impossible to say how the decree will actually change the yearly net income of those involved, since income (i.e., work) norms have not yet been set. But whether norms are high or low, troubles continue for the regime. For if they are set low, the government is obliged to make just that many more consumer goods available. On the other hand, if the norms are high, it will make the reduction—as reduction—meaningless. Moreover, it would be inconsistent with New Course policies to have the reduction exposed as inconsequential. Whatever the government does decide about the norms, however, this much can at least be said now: the regime, through the new decree, will oblige craftsmen, self- and cooperatively-employed, to meet production quotas for the first time, since these men will now be forced to pay a tax on a predetermined income.

Recent and Related

Russia By the Back Door, by Leon Maks (*Sheed & Ward*: \$3.50). When Soviet Russia entered the war against Germany, its government commissioned the author to find the head of the Polish underground, who had been sent East in the mass deportations of the Nazi-Soviet Pact era. In a 13,000-mile trip through Russia and Siberia, Maks carried out his search and at the same time obtained a panoramic experience of life in the USSR. This is the record of his experience, and his conclusions from it.

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